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ABSTRACT

The Exploring America's Communities (EAC) project, sponsored by the American Association of Community Colleges, involved 41 competitively-selected community colleges working to strengthen the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture on their campuses. Published as part of the project, these four newsletters describe the project and report on progress made by the participating colleges. The first newsletter, published in February 1996, describes the goals of the project, provides a list of colleges selected to participate, and describes a related teleconference. The second issue, published in June 1996, describes conferences held by EAC college teams to work with project mentors, provides brief biographies of 15 EAC mentors, and presents updates of progress made by 11 participating colleges. The third issue, from October 1996, presents "The American Identity...A Work in Progress" (David Berry), describing issues of national identity, as well as progress reports from 14 colleges. The final issue of the project, published in January 1997, describes a national conference held to determine outcomes from the EAC and to plan for continuing the initiatives, presents "Service Learning and the Humanities: Partners in the Quest for Common Ground" (Robert Franco), and presents updates from 11 colleges. (HAA)

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ED 438 881

In Quest of Common Ground:
A Faculty Development Newsletter of the Exploring America's Communities Project

Issues 1-4, February 1996-January 1997

Diane U. Eisenberg, Editor
Nadya Labib, Associate Editor

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EXPRESSION COMMUNITIES OF PLACE

In Quest of Common Ground

A FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER OF THE EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Issue 1 *A publication of the American Association of Community Colleges* *February 1996*

From the Editors:

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is pleased to present the inaugural issue of *In Quest of Common Ground*, a faculty development and networking newsletter of the *Exploring America's Communities* project. *In Quest of Common Ground* will be published four times during 1996. It will report on the progress of forty-one competitively-selected community colleges working to strengthen the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture on their campuses.

In Quest of Common Ground will also present special topic articles on addressing American pluralism and identity in the community college classroom, news from NEH, and resources from other organizations addressing these same issues.

The editors of *In Quest of Common Ground* welcome your reactions to this first issue and invite you to contribute stories, resources, and information about related activities at your college for publication in subsequent issues. Submissions for the next issue are due by May 1, 1996. Write to us at AACC, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410, Washington, DC 20036 (email: nlabib@aacc.nche.edu) or call Nadya Labib, project coordinator at 202/728-0200 x237 or Diane U. Eisenberg, project director at 202/393-2208. We look forward to sharing your experiences with your colleagues across the country.

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What Do We Have In Common As Americans?

Forty-one Colleges Selected for AACC Project on American Pluralism and Identity

Forty-one community colleges will implement innovative action plans to strengthen the teaching and learning of American history, literature and culture on their campuses through participation in AACC's *Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground* project.

The work accomplished by the selected college teams will serve as models for other community colleges nationwide that are seeking to infuse their humanities and social science curricula with ideas, discussions, and readings about American pluralism and identity. The project is part of the National Endowment for the Humanities' National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity.

The projects designed by the selected colleges represent a wide range of approaches to addressing American pluralism and identity within the community college curriculum. Many projects focus on enhancing existing curriculum, a good number will develop new interdisciplinary courses, and others target faculty development as a critical first step. Mississippi Gulf

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Colleges Selected to Participate in Project

West Coast

Anoka Ramsey Community College, MN
Black River Technical College, AR
Collin County Community College, TX
Danville Area Community College, IL
Fresno City College, CA
Harold Washington College, IL
Indian Hills Community College, IA
Iowa Central Community College, IA
Kirkwood Community College, IA
Lee College, TX
Leeward Community College, HI
Nuñez Community College, LA
Rancho Santiago College, CA
San Antonio College, TX
Santa Rosa Junior College, CA
Tarrant County Junior College District, TX
The Metropolitan Community Colleges, MO
Tulsa Junior College, OK
Tyler Junior College, TX
West Los Angeles College, CA

East Coast

Alpena Community College, MI
Atlanta Metropolitan College, GA
Bergen Community College, NJ
Bronx Community College, NY
Butler County Community College, PA
Carroll Community College, MD
Central Florida Community College, FL
Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College, SC
Cumberland County College, NJ
Hagerstown Junior College, MD
Harrisburg Area Community College, PA
Hudson County Community College, NJ
Itawamba Community College, MS
Lakeland Community College, OH
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, MS
Monroe Community College, NY
Motlow State Community College, TN
Northampton County Area Community College, PA
Rockland Community College, NY
Southeast Community College, KY
Valencia Community College, FL

Exploring America's Communities *is a project of the American Association of Community Colleges, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and conducted in cooperation with the Community College Humanities Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society*

Forty-one Colleges Selected

(continued from page 1)

Coast Community College (MS), for example, will create a new interdisciplinary course to explore what divides Americans and what brings them together through the study of great American films. Anoka Ramsey Community College (MN) will organize workshops to help faculty integrate discussions, readings and assignments on American pluralism with their current curriculum.

The projects also reflect various pedagogical strategies. Represented are projects that include service learning components, team teaching, collaborative-learning, and course-linking. Leeward Community College (HI) plans to incorporate co-curricular presentations transmitted by cable and interactive television into courses being offered at multiple campuses.

"These forty-one community colleges represent a marvelous array of approaches to teaching and learning about American pluralism and identity," said Judy Jeffrey Howard, program officer, National Endowment for the Humanities, "and we expect the project to engage great numbers of faculty and students in an exciting search for common ground."

The participating colleges will accomplish their goals through a set of activities coordinated by the AACC project office. Each community college will send a team of two faculty members and one college administrator to one of two regional conferences. At these conferences, college teams will work intensively with an assigned mentor, attend presentations by experts on key issues, draw on the specific expertise of a resource group to enhance their proposed activities, and produce a clear plan of action to implement activities on their campuses.

The mentoring process will continue throughout the eleven-month project period via correspondence and telephone conferences, highlighted by a campus site visit to each college from its mentor. AACC will publish a final case study monograph in mid-1997 documenting the work of the forty project college teams.

Exploring America's Communities is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and is being conducted in cooperation with the Community College Humanities Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society.

Exploring America's Communities Teleconference

E Pluribus Unum: The Nation Looks at What it Means to be an American

By Kara J. Cvancara

This article is reprinted from the October 17, 1995 issue of the Community College Times.

Farmers use a phrase, "hybrid vigor," to describe a strain of corn, wheat or other crop that is made stronger by the combination of two very different strains of the plant.

"It is a metaphor for America," said William Ferris, director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. During a two and a half hour teleconference broadcast from Washington, DC, to 25,000 viewers at 500 community college campuses, Ferris and a dozen other distinguished scholars and writers kicked off what is intended to be a national conversation about what it means to be an American. By January, forty community colleges will be selected for assistance in integrating discussion about American pluralism and identity into their curricula.

"Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground," broadcast Oct. 10, was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. NEH Chairman Sheldon Hackney called upon the panelists and viewers to avoid "sound bite debate" and to begin an informed conversation about how wide the circle of "we" in "We the people..." extends.

Community college presidents prepare for their teleconference segment. (l to r) Jerry Sue Thornton, Cuyahoga Community College, Diane U. Eisenberg, Teleconference Producer, Stephen K. Mittelstet, Richland College, and Constance Carroll, San Diego Mesa College

"Is there an American identity greater than the sum of its parts?" he asked.

Hackney launched his idea for a national conversation about the American identity in 1993 saying he was concerned about the growing divisiveness in America.

Events since then, such as the Oklahoma City bombing and the O.J. Simpson trial, have only reinforced these worries, he said.

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Exploring at the AACC Convention

Don't miss your opportunity to learn more about AACC's *Exploring America's Communities* project and *Community Conversations*, a joint project of Phi Theta Kappa and the Community College Humanities Association at:

Forum #85: National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity: Curriculum and Community Programs

Monday, April 15, 1996
2:00 - 3:00 pm
Forsythe Room

Teleconference

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"Americans have begun to accept the belief that identity for one ethnic or racial group means a loss of identity for another group," said panelist Sara Evans, professor of history at the University of Minnesota.

"We must get beyond that zero-sum view. The history of America is a history of expanding the 'we' in 'We the people' to people of other cultures and races and ideas." Evans described the function of public spaces in the history of American culture. Civic groups and town squares, long-time forums for meeting, are disappearing and with them, dialogue between Americans of different groups.

"Too many of our public spaces—think of shopping malls—bring us together only as consumers, not a citizens."

"I think people are afraid that if we talk about our differences we'll never get to common ground," Evans said. "There is a tendency to rush to common ground."

"Why are we so fascinated by birds of color and not people of color?" said poet Pat Mora.

In her classroom, Evans said she encourages students to discuss their differences. "It is 'freeing' for the students to discover that they don't have to like each other to work together toward a common goal," she said.

The teleconference panel discussions, moderated by Charlayne Hunter-Gault, national correspondent for the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, focused on three kinds of communities—communities of place, ideas and expression.

Drawing on original essays, stories and poems written, in some cases, for the teleconference discussion, each panelist shared their experiences of the American community. Several dozen students and educators at the teleconference sites called in to ask questions of the panelists during the show.

Callers asked the panel to comment on the recent movement to make English the nation's official language, the fear and cynicism that prevents interaction between ethnic groups and the ways educators can infuse multiculturalism into the curriculum.

Linda Ching Sledge, a professor of English at Westchester Community College, NY, noted that the community college classroom truly is multicultural, containing students that cross all racial, economic, gender and age groups.

News from NEH

Dear Colleagues:

I am delighted that you are engaged in the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity. This newsletter is an excellent way to keep up to date on NEH. Our newest competition is a three-year special opportunity in Teaching with Technology. We are encouraging proposals that enhance teaching and learning through electronic technologies such as digital audio, video and imaging, hypertext and hypermedia, video-conferencing, speech processing, the Internet, and the World Wide Web. At the first deadline, **April 5, 1996**, the program hopes to fund projects of national significance with wide-ranging impact in schools, colleges, or universities.

To find out more about this opportunity, please contact us. You may consult the NEH Home Page at http:\\www.neh.fed.us, call the Education Development and Demonstration cluster in the new Division of Research and Education at (202) 606-8380, (e-mail: education@neh.fed.us), e-mail any program officer using their first initial and last name (i.e. jhoward@neh.fed.us), or write to us at NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20506.

For information on all other NEH programs including Challenge Grants and Public Programs and Enterprise, you may consult the NEH Home Page, call the Public Information Office at (202) 606-8400, TDD (202) 606-8282, e-mail that office at info@neh.fed.us, or write to us at the above address.

Despite a 40% budget cut, a severe reduction in staff, government furloughs, and snow storms, we are still accepting proposals and funding exciting projects. And we are eager to work with you. Cuts have meant reorganization of NEH programs and reconfiguration of office space within the Old Post Office Building. Telephone lines, computer networks, and paper files are being dislodged, disconnected and rearranged. If you have difficulty reaching a staff member in one medium, please try another. Any inconvenience is only temporary.

I look forward to working with you.

Best wishes,
Judy Jeffrey Howard
Program Officer
Division of Education and Research

Leaders Speak About the National Conversation

Excerpts from the remarks of David R. Pierce, President, American Association of Community Colleges and Sheldon Hackney, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities at the Exploring America's Communities Teleconference.

"The nation's community colleges and our association are very pleased to be a part of this National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity. We are especially proud that today's conversation is taking place at our colleges. Community colleges—often called "the people's colleges"—have traditionally served as "public spaces to

David R. Pierce

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"This National Conversation is not meant to be idle chatter, but a disciplined conversation informed by the humanities—that is, the study of history, literature, philosophy, language, comparative religious study, and so on. The humanities bring us methods, ways of approaching difficult and seemingly conflicting ideas, and they bring

Sheldon Hackney

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David R. Pierce

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which community members can come to discuss perplexing issues and to reach solutions. And so I believe it is especially fitting that we are continuing to fill that role today. Our hope is that the *Exploring America's Communities Teleconference* will spark ongoing conversations about what it means to be an American—conversations that will continue in community and classroom settings over the coming year."

Sheldon Hackney

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us certain habits of mind: analysis, broad reading, the integration of knowledge gleaned from diverse sources, the use of the historical context to illuminate current problems, the awareness that there are multiple perspectives on every subject, taking the time to understand other points of view and to refine one's own. Such habits of mind should shape and inform the National Conversation."

Teleconference Available on Videotape

Exploring America's Communities, *an Excellent Faculty Development Resource*

This edited version of the *Exploring America's Communities Teleconference* features presentations by a distinguished cadre of humanities scholars and community college leaders on what it means to be an American—who are we, what divides us, what brings us together. Moderated by Charlayne Hunter-Gault of PBS' NewsHour, this program is intended to initiate discussion and learning about how to find the common values and goals for which diverse communities must strive.

Exploring America's Communities includes poetry readings, music, and call-in segments from community college audiences across the country. This 60-minute VHS tape is available from the Community College Press, PO Box 311, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701, 301/490-8116.

Order #6009
$30

Teleconference moderator Charlayne Hunter-Gault in conversation with a panelist.

American Association of Community Colleges
Exploring America's Communities Project
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036
202/728-0200

Editor: Diane U. Eisenberg
Associate Editor: Nadya Labib

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In Quest of Common Ground

A FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER OF THE EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Issue 2 | A publication of the American Association of Community Colleges | June 1996

American Pluralism and Identity Conferences Held

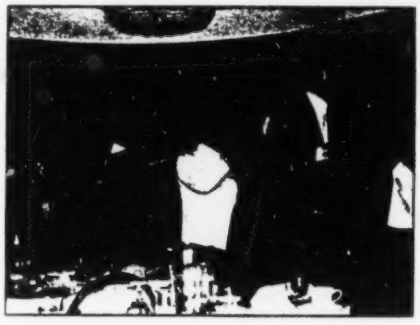
Mentors Help Colleges Refine Action Plans

Exploring America's Communities college teams from across the country met at two American pluralism and identity conferences in March to develop specific action plans for strengthening the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture on their campuses. Twenty-one college teams met in Los Angeles, California, March 9-11 and twenty college teams met in Washington, DC, March 23-25.

The regional conferences afforded each participating team the opportunity to meet extensively with its assigned mentor, attend presentations on integrating materials from various racial and ethnic groups into their curriculum, develop peer networks, resolve questions about specific course content, and hone its action plan into a precise set of steps to reach the team's stated goals.

The opportunity to work with a mentor at several points during the refinement process was of great value to participants. As one team member said, "Before the conference, we were not sure where to begin. Now we know how to begin, how to proceed and we have a clearer idea of our destination." Another participant, commenting on the value of developing an action plan, said, "We are leaving with a better focused plan and a clear timetable for accomplishing it."

In addition to mentor-team meetings, the conferences featured presentations about actual materials that could be integrated into curricula to add a range of cultural perspectives. Presentations on authentic African American, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American literature and history yielded extensive bibliographies for faculty members to use in revising and expanding their curricula. Resource persons with extensive knowledge of specific ethnic and racial groups consulted with those teams seeking assistance in their areas.



Conference participants take a break in a rare light moment of a heavily scheduled day.

Mentors will continue to interact with their assigned teams for the remainder of the project period. Each mentor will make one site visit to their assigned colleges, continue to assess their progress, assist in making additional refinements to the action plan, and develop next steps. The teams will reconvene in January 1997 to share their progress and accomplishments.

Regional conference highlights included presentations on the role of the community college president in strengthening the study of American pluralism and identity. The topic was addressed by Anne Mulder, former president, Lake Michigan College, at the east coast conference (shown above), and Constance Carroll, president, San Diego Mesa College, at the west coast conference.

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Exploring America's Communities *is a project of the American Association of Community Colleges, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and conducted in cooperation with the Community College Humanities Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society.*

Mentors Selected for Their Expertise in American Cultures

AACC has gathered the following group of distinguished humanities educators as mentors to *Exploring America's Communities* colleges.

Elizabeth Brown-Guillory, associate professor of English at the University of Houston, Texas, has extensive experience reshaping curriculum to include minority texts by pairing canonical and noncanonical readings. Her recently written play *Missing Sister* premiered this year in Houston.

Carole Edmonds, dean of arts and sciences at Kellogg Community College, Michigan, has directed NEH projects on the use of multicultural texts. She is currently leading a two-summer institute on Native American and African American history and literature.

Charles Errico, professor of history and assistant division chair at Northern Virginia Community College, also teaches history at the graduate level at George Mason University. Errico has developed a cable television course on American history since World War II, which focuses on cultural and social history.

Kathy Fedorko, professor of English at Middlesex County College, New Jersey, is the author of *Gender and the Gothic in the Fiction of Edith Wharton* (University of Alabama Press, 1995). Fedorko has directed several NEH projects, and served as a mentor for AACC's *Advancing the Humanities* projects.

Robert Franco, associate professor of anthropology and coordinator of Asian-Pacific studies at Kapi'olani Community College, Hawai'i, directed the college's AACC/Kellogg Beacon project, and its service learning program—*Integrating Service into a Multicultural Writing Curriculum*.

Jo Marshall, dean of instruction at Chattachoochee Valley Community College, Alabama, has directed several NEH projects including *Community Conversations*, a joint project of Phi Theta Kappa and the Community College Humanities Association. She is a national facilitator for Phi Theta Kappa's humanities-based Leadership Development Program and is also a board member.

Virginia Meyn, professor of humanities and English at Saddleback College, California, has been active in the development of the college's Cross-Cultural Studies, Women's Studies, and Honors programs. In 1995, she co-directed an NEH Summer Institute on Latin American literatures and cultures.

Anne Mulder, professor of higher education at Nova Southeastern University, professor of English and former president of Lake Michigan College, has served on numerous national boards, including that of the American Council on Education and AACC. She currently advises the Kellogg National Fellowship Program.

Max Reichard, professor of history and humanities at Delgado Community College, Louisiana, has published numerous scholarly works on history and humanities topics. An active contributor to NEH projects, he has particular expertise in social and comparative history, the history of higher education, and diversity in the higher education curriculum.

Daniel Rivas, dean of liberal arts at Saddleback College, California, specializes in French language, literature, and civilization. He has had administrative responsibility for several NEH-funded projects, serves frequently on NEH review panels, and was a mentor for *Advancing the Humanities* and *Improving Foreign Language Education at Community Colleges*.

Carmen Salazar, chair of the department of foreign languages at Los Angeles Valley College, California, is author of *Avanzando: gramática española y lectura, the Teacher's Annotated Edition*. Salazar chaired several test development committees (*DANTES, Spanish Achievement Test*, and *AATSP National Exam*) and has developed language exams for the Educational Testing Service.

Rebecca Seaman, instructor of social sciences at Southern Union State Community College, Alabama and Phi Theta Kappa chapter advisor, has extensive experience developing and directing curriculum development workshops. Her recent scholarship has focused on periods of trauma to America's native tribes and communities.

Robert Sessions, professor of philosophy at Kirkwood Community College, Iowa, has directed several NEH projects and served as a mentor for AACC's *Advancing the Humanities* projects. He teaches courses in ethics and philosophy, and two thematic interdisciplinary courses.

Eleanor Q. Tignor, professor of English and chair of the task force on pluralism at LaGuardia Community College, New York, has been at the forefront of addressing issues of curriculum reform and multiculturalism at the college and nationally. She lectures extensively on composition, African American literature, and multiculturalism.

David Trask, professor of history at Guilford Technical Community College, North Carolina, specializes in American history with particular expertise in the Native American experience, immigration, and ethnocultural analysis of politics. He is currently involving two-year college history faculty in the American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians.

REGISTER YOUR COLLEGE NOW!

From Me to We: Renewing America's Civic Life in an Information Age

A National Teleconference, October 24, 1996

Invite students, faculty, and community leaders to join moderator **Charlayne Hunter-Gault** (*The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*) and panelists **Benjamin Barber** (Rutgers University), **Lawrence Grossman** (former President, PBS and NBC News), **Connie Odems** (former Sr. V.P., AACC) and **Jeremy Rifkin** (The Foundation on Economic Trends), and others, as they address:

- rising divisiveness, tensions, and lack of trust
- declining civic participation
- a growing gap between the *haves* and *have-nots*
- the isolating nature of new technology

For more information, and to request registration forms, call 202/393-2208 or e-mail eaconsult@aol.com.

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News from Participating Community Colleges

What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common? *Work to integrate these questions into the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture is underway at community colleges participating in AACC's* Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground *project. Enthusiastic reports from college team members indicate that the forty-one colleges are making great strides toward infusing ideas and materials on American pluralism and identity into their classrooms. Here are stories on their progress:*

Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Coon Rapids, Minnesota... *transforming the curriculum through faculty workshops on American pluralism and identity*

Anoka-Ramsey Community College team members—Brenda Robert, Gina Sanderson, and Steve Wiley—began to implement their Action Plan by calling on the college's leadership to demonstrate continued support for the project's year-long activities to explore diversity and commonality within the college community. The plan, developed at AACC's West Coast Regional Conference on American Pluralism and Identity, calls for creating and conducting a series of faculty development workshops this spring.

As a first step toward institutionalizing the college's Action Plan, Brenda Robert addressed the President's Council, which reaffirmed its support for the team's activities. The office of the dean of academic affairs agreed to provide funds to develop the faculty workshops.

To introduce the workshops, the team conducted a week of conversations in April for students, faculty, and staff on American pluralism and identity, using the video of AACC's *Exploring America's Communities Teleconference* as a conversation starter. Two-hour blocks each afternoon were devoted to showing segments of the teleconference followed by conversation on the topics presented. Team members lead lively discussions about the diverse nature of their community, the various identities that people in it hold, and individual and communal attachments to place.

To stimulate college-wide involvement, the project team produced the first issue of *Pluralism Project Newsletter*, describing activities underway and inviting others, through a response form, to participate. The newsletter was distributed to all faculty and administrators. Mentor Max Reichard, Delgado Community College, will make a site visit in September. *(Brenda Robert, 612-427-2600)*

* * * * * * * *

Bergen Community College, Paramus, New Jersey...*incorporating a range of perspectives into existing and new courses in American history, literature, and culture*

Bergen Community College's team—Amparo Codding, Alan Kaufman, and Matthew Panczyk—completed the early stages of its Action Plan to integrate American pluralism into the humanities curriculum.

Discussions have been held with Bergen's English and history faculty. Plans are underway, in conjunction with the college's Faculty Development Program, to present a series of workshops on "American pluralism and identity in history and literature curricula" during Fall 1996. The next step is to select speakers, specific topics and dates. Speakers will be drawn from inside and outside the Bergen community and will include mentor David Trask, Guilford Technical Community College, to discuss the integration of materials on American pluralism into history courses.

Bergen Community College's vice president for academic affairs presented the Action Plan to the board of trustees, and team members have been given released time to prepare revised model syllabi for *American Literature I* and *American History I*. These courses will be taught on a pilot basis in Fall 1996. In addition, Kaufman and Panzyck will design two new courses: *American Ethnic Literature* and *The History of Pluralism in the United States*. Course syllabi, reading lists, and teaching strategies will be revised into a model that demonstrates how American pluralism can be incorporated into instruction. These new courses will go through several stages of approval prior to being implemented in Fall 1997. *(Alan Kaufman 201-447-7100)*

* * * * * * * *

Black River Technical College, Pocahontas, Arkansas...*linking classroom work in American pluralism and identity with a community program*

It is not at all unusual for residents of Pocahontas and Randolph County, Arkansas to ask "How is the wall project coming along?" whenever they see one of the Black River Technical College *Exploring America's Communities* team members—Charlotte Power, Jan Tyler, or Melody Walker. Since returning from the west coast regional conference, the three have been busy both on campus and in their community developing *The Century Wall*, the centerpiece of the college's *Exploring America's Communities* project. Their work is receiving resounding praise and support from the college's board of directors, faculty, and staff.

The Century Wall will be a mural in downtown Pocahontas featuring the faces of one hundred twentieth-century Americans who have made a difference. In toto, those selected will reflect the diversity of America, and will serve as a focus of learning for students of all ages who visit the wall and read a specially prepared companion booklet. In Fall 1996, students in English and history classes will select, research, and write biographies of the figures to be represented on *The Century Wall*. The biographies will be published in a booklet that will be made available to visitors to *The Wall*. Actual work on *The Wall* is scheduled to begin in Spring 1997. The team has already received more than two hundred nominations in response to letters and surveys they sent to colleagues in the history department at Arkansas State University, from their colleagues at Black River Technical College, from various community organizations and public school groups, and from interested individuals.

Other components of the college's Action Plan include enlisting the participation of Black River Technical College's

(continued on page 4)

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

dietary management instructor who has agreed to infuse multicultural readings and activities into her curriculum during the fall semester. As well, the college's adult education reading instructor has agreed to conduct a reading project in which his students will read multicultural children's masterpieces to children in local daycare centers and pre-school programs. *English I* and *English II* classes will include a newly added novel selected from bibliographies of Native American, Asian American, Latin American, and African American readings that the team received at the AACC conference. Mentor Carole Edmonds, Kellogg Community College, will assist and guide the team throughout the project. *(Jan Tyler: 501/892-4565)*

* * * * * * *

Bronx Community College, Bronx, New York...*strengthening humanities curriculum through the inclusion of American pluralism and identity readings*

Bronx Community College's team—Carolyn Liston, Isabel Mirsky, and James Ryan—arrived at the East Coast Regional Conference on American Pluralism and Identity with a strong sense of purpose and left with a comprehensive plan of action. The team, consisting of representatives from the college's English, history, and communication arts and sciences department, will work on one course within each discipline. Each team member will research and assemble a set of materials to enhance a unit within their respective courses.

Team members presented their Action Plan to their respective departments and solicited help in selecting a specific course unit to be enhanced. Ryan, the team's coordinator, also contacted other liberal arts departments to join the effort.

The three team members are now developing the course materials and plan to field test them in one section of each course in Fall 1996. Mentor Anne Mulder, Nova Southeastern University, is assisting in the selection and development of materials, and will visit the campus in October.

The Bronx Community College team has also built an important evaluation component into their project. A questionnaire completed by the team, students, and colleagues will gather information on reactions to the revised units. Team members believe that this project offers the college a unique opportunity to further its goals of strengthening the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture, while stimulating dialogue and collaboration among departments and faculty members. *(James D. Ryan: 718/289-5652)*

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Butler County Community College, Butler, Pennsylvania...*revising American history, literature, and fine arts courses*

Since their return from the East Coast Regional Conference on American Pluralism and Identity, the Butler County Community College team—Dave Anderson, Maggie Stock, and Ellen Dodge—has put its Action Plan into motion. The team addressed the humanities/social sciences division at its monthly meeting in April, sharing their plan and enlisting their colleagues support and participation. They also informed the college's Rho Phi chapter of Phi Theta Kappa of their activities.

Lee College faculty members attend workshop on the infusion of Mexican-American literature and history into their existing courses

Butler County Community College's Action Plan calls for a series of text and syllabus changes to survey courses offered in the history, English, and fine arts departments. Team member Dodge is working to enhance two courses, *Early American History* and *Recent American History*. In collaboration with instructors who will teach sections of these courses in the fall, Dodge has selected two new textbooks, *A People and a Nation* by Mary B. Norton et al (Houghton Mifflin Co.) and *Portrait of America* by Stephen B. Oats (Houghton Mifflin Co.). The history faculty has selected specific articles and has begun writing inventory questions to evaluate incoming students' levels of understanding American history.

English faculty member Anderson has requested recommendations from English instructors regarding changes to the current American literature sequence. Changes to this curriculum will be more extensive than those to the history curriculum, and therefore, will need the approval of several faculty bodies before implementation. Revision will take place during Summer 1996 and will begin moving through the approval process in the fall. It is anticipated that the revised *American Literature II* will be offered in Spring 1997, with the new *American Literature I* offered in the fall.

Team member Stock is working with instructors in art and music to explore textbook options and new library resources and to examine the possibilities of team teaching and identification of guest lecturers. Changes to *Art 101* and *Music 101* will be implemented in Fall 1996. Stock will also work to modify the content of *Literature and the Arts* to include works reflective of America's plurality. The revised course will debut in Spring 1997.

The team is also communicating with colleges in very different demographic areas. They have established correspondence regarding texts, speakers, and audio visual materials with two sister community colleges whom they met through participation in the *Exploring America's Communities* project. Mentor Charlie Errico, Northern Virginia Community College, will conduct his site visit in the fall. *(Ellen Dodge: 412/287-8711)*

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Copies of the Exploring America's Communities Teleconference Videotape are Still Available

Contact Community College Press: 301/490-8116

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

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Central Florida Community College, Ocala, Florida...*assisting faculty to conduct classroom conversations about American pluralism and identity*

Central Florida Community College's team—Ira Holmes, Debra Vazquez, and Ron Cooper—returned to Ocala energized by the excitement and exchange of ideas (and hard work) at the east coast conference. Other members of the college's *Exploring America's Communities* committee shared the conference attendees' excitement when they read the new Action Plan. The plan focuses on teacher training workshops for the entire faculty during the fall orientation/in-service days, including a plenary session featuring a talk by a prominent scholar, followed by breakout groups.

Throughout the fall semester, the committee will host brown bag roundtable discussions for faculty members. The sessions will be devoted to enhancing discussion of American pluralism and identity in existing courses. One session will focus on literature; three instructors will present a variety of classroom exercises designed to stimulate conversation through the use of literature. The speakers will present methods of incorporating these activities into courses other than literature, as well. Similar sessions on history and the arts are planned. The staff and professional development committee will integrate these roundtable discussions into its present brown bag series, thereby ensuring good attendance.

An article in the college newspaper, *Patriot Press*, drew comments and telephone calls from other faculty and staff members interested in the project. Most importantly, the project enjoys hearty support from college president James Hinson who believes that not only will students benefit, but in the long run, the community will benefit, and faculty collegiality will be greatly strengthened.

The college's *Exploring America's Communities* committee will meet several times over the summer to work out details for the fall schedule of events, which include a visit from mentor Dan Rivas, Saddleback College. *(Ron Cooper 904-237-2111)*

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Fresno City College, Fresno, California...*establishing a new American Studies discipline*

Fresno City College's Action Plan responds directly to the mission of the State Center Community College District of which it is a part. The mission states the importance of *continuing to evaluate the college curriculum for sensitivity to diversity; seeking solutions to diversity issues, providing student and staff development activities on diversity, and encouraging the acceptance of the multicultural character of the students and staff. A critical examination of "who and what we are," necessitates new approaches to teaching and to what is being taught.* The team's Action Plan acknowledges the need to confront diversity issues and focuses on beginning a dialogue on the commonalities of the American experience as the next step.

Atlanta Metropolitan College president, Harold E. Wade, discusses the college's project to increase multicultural awareness at this urban, homogeneous institution with team members Joyce Peoples, Ojeda Penn, and Grady Culpepper.

Fresno City College team members—Wendy Rose, Kehinde Solwazi, Gerry Stokle, and Richard Valencia—have designed an Action Plan to establish a new discipline at the college entitled *American Studies*. As part of this program, two courses will be created: *American Pluralism and Identity* and *American Biographies*. *American Pluralism and Identity* will be offered in October 1996, and *American Biographies* will begin in January 1997. Both courses will be offered for general education transfer credit in humanities or social science.

The project team plans to have a guest speaker on American pluralism and identity at a faculty in-service day in August, and to integrate this topic into the overall college process of curriculum development. Plans are underway to schedule a productive site visit for mentor Robert Sessions, Kirkwood Community College, in October.

The Fresno City College team also organized *Fresno Conversations: A Symposium on Pluralism and Identity*, which took place at the college in April. Approximately 150 students, faculty and community members attended this event, arranged through the School of Arts and Humanities at California State University, Fresno. The symposium was an excellent occasion to kick off Fresno City College's *Exploring America's Communities* Action Plan activities. *(Gerry Stokle: 209/442-8210)*

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Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa, Iowa...*identifying cultural diversity in the Heartland*

"Since lack of biological diversity is dangerous to the survival of life on the planet, what is the logical conclusion we can draw if there is a similar lack of cultural diversity in this country?" is the question that Robert Sessions asked faculty and students at Indian Hills Community College at the end of his address to them on his visit there last May Day.

Sessions, Indian Hills' mentor for the AACC *Exploring America's Communities* project, spent the entire day on the Indian Hills campus, speaking to the president, the vice-presidents and deans, and Arts and Sciences faculty and students. Noting the progress that the college has made in implementing its Action Plan, he observed that Indian Hills was "significantly beyond where it was expected to be in this project." The college's team members have reason to be proud.

The Action Plan developed by team members—Rhonda Eakins, Dana Grove,

(continued on page 6)

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

and Garry Meredith—calls for the college to approach the project objective both annually and thematically. Because 1996 is the sesquentennial year for the state of Iowa and because of the college's name, the Indian Hills team concluded that Native American culture be highlighted first. Eakins, humanities program director, is coordinating a cultural fair at the college featuring members of the Mesquawkie tribe, which is indigenous to the southeast Iowa region. Grove, dean of arts and sciences, has created a new course, *Native American Studies* which he will teach next academic year. Meredith, history instructor, has organized a trip to the Oglala Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota this July for students and community members. Participants on this trip will camp out on the reservation for a week and attend workshops on Lakota life and culture presented by the tribe. A traditional Pow Wow will conclude the week's activities. The trip was filled to capacity within a week of its announcement.

Lyle Hellyer, president of the college, has encouraged the team to use the *Exploring America's Communities* project to examine cultural diversity both in the country and in the southeast Iowa community, as well. He envisions Indian Hills Community College becoming a resource center for materials collected by students and community members, as they examine the history of cultures in the area, their current issues, and their future. *(Dana Grove: 515/683-5166)*

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San Antonio College, San Antonio, Texas...*creating a new American Cultures interdisciplinary program on multiple perspectives of the American experience*

San Antonio College's team—Dawn Elmore-McCrary, Clyde Hudgins, and Margaret Crehan Hyde—is creating a new interdisciplinary program, *American Cultures*, to be coordinated by a committee of six faculty members from the English, history and sociology departments.

The program will consist of four team-taught courses, the first of which will be offered in Spring 1997. This first course, *American Pluralism and Identity: A Quest for Common Ground from a Regional Perspective*, will explore common American values as they are expressed in the following San Antonio/South Texas ethnic communities: German-American, African-American, and Mexican-American. Students will explore the sociology, historical development, and literary expressions of values Americans hold in common. Field trips and guest speakers will be an integral part of the course's requirements.

To date, the team has accomplished a number of tasks including; selecting faculty, writing the course description, initiating course design, completing a long-range plan for the program, obtaining a summer grant for supplemental research, and course development. Faculty members are creating a workbook of readings and exercises, and a team-teaching manual for use by any discipline as a guide to this pedagogical approach.

The team has also planned a colloquium series on cultural diversity, an American pluralism and identity essay contest, and an *American Common Ground Symposium* featuring papers, panel discussions, artwork, and dramatic and musical performances relating to the theme of common ground in the American experience.

Mentor Elizabeth Brown-Guillory visited San Antonio College in late April to meet with college senior administrators, team members, department chairs, the district public relations director, and a reporter from the college's student newspaper, *The Ranger*. *(Margaret Hyde: 210/733-2826)*

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Tarrant County Junior College, Fort Worth, Texas...*enhancing the teaching of American history, literature, and culture through linked courses, curriculum refinement, and faculty development*

Tarrant County Junior College's *common ground planning team*—Jane Harper, Antonio Howell, Tim Gilbert, and Violet O'Valle—has kept its Action Plan on schedule. At the regional conference on American pluralism and identity, the team developed an inclusive, non-traditional approach to teaching American history, literature, and culture. The fundamental focus is to develop a linked course that integrates the core curriculum courses of *American History I* and *English Composition I*, emphasizing what it means to be an American and the quest for common ground.

Administrators and faculty throughout the district received written information on the objectives of the project and an invitation to participate in the initial phase of the plan to pair the two courses. The response was immediate. Presidents and deans acknowledged the project and offered both oral and written encouragement. History and English teaching teams emerged on three of the four campuses, and the project team envisions a fourth teaching team to be organized once that new campus is fully staffed.

Mentor Elizabeth Brown-Guillory conducted a site visit to Tarrant County Junior College in April, where she met with team members and administrators. She also addressed representatives from English, Spanish, history, art, speech communication, sociology and philosophy on the topic "What do we have in common as Americans?".

The project team will continue to inform and involve the faculty and administration through its new newsletter, *The Quest*. Requests for release time and additional funds to coordinate faculty development have been formally presented to the presidents and deans of each campus. Team members are eagerly awaiting positive responses. *(Jane Harper: 817/788-8860)*

* * * * * * *

Leeward Community College, Pearl City, Hawai'i...*integrating community and faculty perspectives into a television course on the Asian Pacific immigrant experience*

Leeward Community College's team—Donald Thomson, Patricia Kennedy, and Douglas Dykstra—is developing two television courses that examine the role of Asian Pacific immigrants in the Leeward O'ahu communities of Waipahu and Pearl City. The courses are *American History 282* and *American Studies 211*. They are tapping community leaders and local experts to supplement perspectives presented in the classrooms.

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NEWS, *continued*

Several developments on the Leeward Community College campus have helped to expand the involvement of academic colleagues with the project. Provost Barbara Polk has reaffirmed her support and the team has recruited colleagues in cognate disciplines for future collaborations. The team has made contact with the college's Phi Theta Kappa chapter which is pursuing a community service project to dovetail with *Exploring America's Communities* activities.

The head librarian ordered thirty-seven new titles based on selections from bibliographies the team received at the regional conference. These purchases strengthened the library's collection of Native American, Latin American, African American, and Asian and Pacific Islander resources. Titles include Ronald Takaki's *Spacious Dreams: The First Wave of Asian Immigration*, Vincent Franklin's *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of African-American Resistance*, Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* and *The Beet Queen*, and Elizabeth Carmichael's *The Skeleton at the Feast: The Day of the Dead in Mexico*.

At a site visit by mentor Robert Franco, Kapi'olani Community College, faculty and staff gathered to hear him speak about the *Exploring America's Communities* project, its potential links to other community-based opportunities, and Leeward Community College's place in a growing and shifting community. The team is now following up with interested faculty to create a special topics course in Native American literature with a more focused study of Hawaiian sovereignty issues in the community to draw out rich points of comparison. The team is finding that the *Exploring America's Communities* project not only builds ties to surrounding communities, but it has the potential to build a stronger, more collaborative community of academic colleagues. *(Douglas Dykstra, 808/455-0269)*

See the fall issue of* In Quest of Common Ground *for news from more* Exploring America's Communities *colleges!

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News From NEH

Dear Colleagues:

I've been following your projects with great interest, and I am delighted that your work is moving forward so decisively. Please continue to send in reports on your progress; we cannot assess our efforts without your reflections and comments.

National Conversation activities continue at NEH as Chairman Sheldon Hackney prepares to report to the Congress and to the American people on this important Endowment initiative. On June 13 - 14, the directors of national conversation projects from across the country gathered to discuss what has been learned about our civic culture. Community colleges were well-represented: Diane U. Eisenberg and James Mahoney spoke for this AACC project, and David Berry represented the Phi Theta Kappa/Community College Humanities Association project *Community Conversations: Toward Shared Understanding of American Identity*.

We heard a great deal from the field this spring—307 applications for the *Teaching with Technology Program* were submitted for the special deadline in April. Proposals to integrate electronic technologies into humanities teaching through materials development, site testing, and teacher training can now be submitted to any of the regular deadlines: September 16, for *Humanities Focus Grants*, and October 1, for larger national projects. New guidelines will be available this summer; to request copies please call 202/606-8380.

Of course, you can also find information on NEH programs and deadlines on our home page. Our web site has been revised and reorganized—it's faster, easier to use, and more informative. Please note that the address was listed incorrectly in the last newsletter: the correct address is **http://www.neh.fed.us**.

I hope to hear from you soon!

Best wishes,
Judith Jeffrey Howard, Program Officer
Division of Research and Education

Highlights in Brief...

Alpena Community College (MI) launched a three-part series of cultural awareness workshops for faculty and community members in April with an evening devoted to the Native American experience ... **Cumberland County College** (NJ) is devoting the summer to development of a new *20th Century American Culture* syllabus, planning an American Studies option, and enhancing English and reading courses with materials that illuminate commonalities in American cultures ... **Danville Area Community College** (IL) is using oral history interviews conducted by students to compile published histories of minority communities—African American, Asian American, and Latino—in the Danville area ... **Hagerstown Junior College** (MD) began its faculty development program to increase awareness of commonalities in Western Maryland's heritage at a colloquium in May that featured presentations by an African American, a Mennonite, and a representative of the Pennsylvania Dutch tradition ... **Harold Washington College** (IL) has scheduled *African American History* and *Latin American History* classes concurrently so that students can meet together or separately; project activities have been integrated into the college-wide budget, and ideas and materials have been solicited from the entire college community ... **Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College** (MS) is developing a new course—*Literature as Film*—chronicling the American experience, with focus on the broad range of America's cultures ... **Monroe Community College** (NY) is developing a new interdisciplinary course entitled *Common Ground-From the Valley of the Genesee* to be team-taught by its three team members—Jeanne Ghent, English department; Mary-jo Popovici, communications department; and Shirley Jennings, history depart-

(continued on page 8)

Highlights in Brief..., *continued*

ment. *The American Reader*, edited by Diane Ravitch (New York: Harper Collins, 1990) is the course text ... **Northampton Community College** (PA) scheduled two faculty development workshops in August. Eleanor Q. Tignor, professor of English at LaGuardia Community College, will lecture on African American literature, and in October, the workshop will focus on teaching strategies ... **Rancho Santiago College** (CA) piloted its new "The City as Text" module in *American History 121 Honors*, requiring students to visit and report on various cultural sites within the city of Santa Ana ... **Rockland Community College** (NY) has recruited fifteen faculty members to assist with revision of *American History I* and *II*, and *American Latino Culture*; the college has committed funding to continue activities during the summer and support faculty development activities in the fall ... **Southeast Community College** (KY) is using e-mail and campus-wide voice mail to keep faculty informed of the college's *Exploring America's Communities* activities and to share resources including articles, readings, and pertinent videos such as the PBS television program, *Different and the Same* and the *Exploring America's Communities Teleconference* ... **Tulsa Junior College** (OK) is conducting a monthly faculty/staff study group entitled *Conversations on American Culture* to encourage infusion of multicultural materials into courses across the curriculum. Invited speakers include *Exploring America's Communities* resource persons Sharon Harley and Lawana Trout ... **Tyler Junior College** (TX) sponsored a campus-wide faculty luncheon to initiate a series of dialogues on *what does it mean to be an American? what divides us as a nation? what brings us together? what is the community college role in defining an American identity?* and *how can we make a difference in the classroom?* ... **Valencia Community College's** (FL) president, Paul Gianini, has approved released time for faculty members on the *Exploring America's Communities* team who will be developing course modules as part of the curriculum renewal project.

Exploring America's Communities *is presented at the AACC Annual Convention by (l to r) George Vaughan, project evaluator and associate director, ACCLAIM, North Carolina State University; Diane U. Eisenberg, project director, AACC; Jo Marshall, project mentor and dean of instruction, Chattahoochee Valley Community College; and David Berry, executive director, Community College Humanities Association.*

American Association of Community Colleges
Exploring America's Communities Project
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036
202/728-0200

Editor: Diane U. Eisenberg
Associate Editor: Nadya Labib

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EXPRESSION COMMUNITIES OF PLACE

In Quest of Common Ground

A FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER OF THE EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Issue 3 | A publication of the American Association of Community Colleges | October 1996

Final Conference Scheduled

College Teams to Reconvene in January

Exploring America's Communities project teams will meet in January to present their progress, share their experiences, discuss challenges faced and—in great measure—overcome. The will plan the continuation of their work to integrate ideas and materials on what it means to be an American into their college curriculum.

The National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity will take place January 18-19, 1997, at the Monteleone Hotel, New Orleans.

This meeting provides project participants the opportunity to share their successes, receive assistance from their counterparts in overcoming obstacles, and establish networks for future collaboration. Roundtable sessions will be conducted by *Exploring America's Communities* mentors. A preview of *Talk to Me: Americans in Conversation*, the NEH-commissioned National Conversation film, will be shown.

The American Association of Community Colleges will be able to accommodate other community college faculty as participants at the Conference on a limited basis. Please contact project coordinator Nadya Labib at nlabib@aacc.nche.edu or 202/ 728-0200 x237 for details.

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What Does It Mean To Be An American?

Early Observations on the National Conversation

NEH Chairman Sheldon Hackney shared his views on the National Conversation at a June Project Directors' Meeting held in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dr. Hackney began by describing how his ideas about the National Conversation have evolved:

- His thinking has come to center on American identity, and not as much on race and ethnicity.
- The phrase *strength through diversity* is not very meaningful until people explore their commonalities. Only then can people feel comfortable enough to talk about diversity and how we differ.
- Recent surveys, polls, and focus groups indicate that Americans don't trust their government, lack confidence in American institutions, and are drifting apart.

> "If we are ever going to enjoy the benefits of diversity and the richness of our cultural heritage, we first have to make people comfortable by finding their commonalities."

(continued on page 9)

Exploring America's Communities

Participating Colleges

Alpena Community College, MI
Anoka Ramsey Community College, MN
Atlanta Metropolitan College, GA
Bergen Community College, NJ
Black River Technical College, AR
Bronx Community College, NY
Butler County Community College, PA
Carroll Community College, MD
Central Florida Community College, FL
Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College, SC
Collin County Community College, TX
Cumberland County College, NJ
Danville Area Community College, IL
Fresno City College, CA
Hagerstown Junior College, MD
Harold Washington College, IL
Harrisburg Area Community College, PA
Hudson County Community College, NJ
Indian Hills Community College, IA
Iowa Central Community College, IA
Itawamba Community College, MS
Kirkwood Community College, IA
Lakeland Community College, OH
Lee College, TX
Leeward Community College, HI
Metropolitan Community Colleges, MO
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, MS
Monroe Community College, NY
Motlow State Community College, TN
Northampton Community College, PA
Nunez Community College, LA
Rancho Santiago College, CA
Rockland Community College, NY
San Antonio College, TX
Santa Rosa Junior College, CA
Southeast Community College, KY
Tarrant County Junior College, TX
Tulsa Junior College, OK
Tyler Junior College, TX
Valencia Community College, FL
West Los Angeles College, CA

The American Identity ... A Work in Progress

by David Berry

Excerpt from a presentation at this project's regional conferences.

What an astonishing program this National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity is! The National Endowment for the Humanities estimates that by January 1996 over 1,800 conversations had already taken place in over 250 cities and towns in 41 states. These include a project to conduct 70 conversations at 20 community colleges across the nation that is being conducted jointly by the Community College Humanities Association (CCHA) and Phi Theta Kappa. Imagine so many groups of fifteen to thirty Americans from all walks of life engaging in deliberate and reasoned conversations about what it means to be an American!

This AACC-sponsored project, *Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground*, is part of the National Conversation, as we work together on faculty and curriculum development projects. You may well become models for change at many other colleges throughout the nation.

Defining Our Terms

One problem that confronts us is how we define the activities and the goals in which we are engaged. We all use terms such as "multiculturalism," "diversity," "ethnicity," and "pluralism" in ambiguous and contradictory ways. The topic—American pluralism and identity—is not always clearly defined. Because this is important, I want to take a moment to review Sheldon Hackney's understanding of American pluralism and identity as revealed in his statements.

The topic of our project is American pluralism and identity. But it is important to realize that the notion of identity is not static or fixed. There is a tendency to try to "capture" the American identity as if it were some essential element that transcends time and place. Who and what we are shifts and changes against who we were and have been. The making of American identity is an ongoing process. Coming to grips with historical change and with the major traditions of our cultures lies at the heart of our undertaking.

As Hackney puts it, "We will work hard to engage the minds of Americans struggling with the difficult aspects of national identity in their everyday lives." He says the question "Who are we?" is actually three related questions: "What principles of governance for our common life should we hold dear? What widespread traits of character or typical behavior give evidence that we share ideals of admired behavior and definitions of unacceptable behavior? How do we think about or describe the whole, the ONE, and what does that imply about who is really included in the nation. How wide is the circle of we?"

The Founding Documents... A Basis for Civic Nationalism

Hackney importantly notes that a major avenue for understanding what it means to be an American is found in the beliefs and values expressed in the classic documents of our nation, especially the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. A key belief that derives from the traditions of these documents is that what keeps our differences from developing into major conflict is a shared commitment to the idea of democracy, an agreement about how to resolve our disagreements. Hackney calls this "civic nationalism"—a notion that is the foundation of almost all popular conceptions of American identity. He points to some of the fundamental conflicts about "who the *We* are" inherent in our democracy; "In our society we have a great deal of liberty and a great deal of inequality. Some Americans have handled the contradiction between these two fundamental principles by saying that equality refers not to equality of condition but to equality of opportunity, equality before the law, and equal access to the political process. But others are deeply troubled by the contradiction and seek to establish a polity in which social justice and equality of condition coincide with the highest ideal of liberty."

Hackney locates key aspects of American identity in this notion of "civic nationalism." But he is also looking to the future and to the ways in which shared understanding of American identity, while not a solution to fundamental social and economic problems, can at least overcome superficial divisions and ugly stereotyping. He draws on David Hollinger's notion of a *postethnic* America in which affiliations are voluntary, not prescribed, thereby allowing for *multiple identities* and *communities of wide scope* in a vibrant democratic society.

Hackney states: "My own belief is that there is a national identity that we can share in a way that brings us together so that we can more easily solve our common problems. Based in democracy, this identity guards individual rights but recognizes the need for a sense of duty to the community. I worry that rights-based individualism on the Left, and market-driven libertarianism on the Right will leave insufficient room for a common vision for the common good. The question absent from our national catechism is, "What do I owe to my fellow citizens?" I believe, further, that there is an inclusive historical narrative in which we all recognize not only the stories of our kith and kin but in which we acknowledge that we are playing roles in a common story, in which we are all linked to each other across barriers of times and boundaries of race, in which we share the shame of our mistakes and the glory of our achievements, in which the meaning of American is to be found in the common ground of its aspirations of liberty and justice for all."

Community Colleges... The Ideal Arena

We may not agree with all of what Hackney has to say—but it is important to see how he has sketched out the terrain we aim to explore and to realize that he intends the widest possible inclusive definition of American pluralism. Indeed, this is why community colleges are such ideal places for projects on American pluralism and identity. Our student populations mirror the broad national constituencies that make up the nation. Our classrooms are places where a degree of trust has already been developed. We have skilled faculty who can help students to develop a vocabulary with which to explore the topic of American pluralism and identity, and faculty with the experience to turn ugly and

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News from Participating Community Colleges

What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common? *Work to integrate these questions into the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture is underway at community colleges participating in AACC's* Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground *project. Enthusiastic reports from college team members indicate that the forty-one colleges are making great strides toward infusing ideas and materials on American pluralism and identity into their classrooms. Here are stories on their progress:*

Nunez Community College, Chalmette, Louisiana...*increasing campus-wide awareness of concepts related to the quest for common ground.*

The Nunez Community College team—Carol Jeandron, Cory Sparks, and Barry Pike—has completed the initial phase of its Action Plan. The Action Plan includes exposing the college community, through learning experiences, to concerns of American pluralism, identity, and diversity, and the search for commonalities. The faculty is being encouraged to modify their course objectives and activities to encompass discussion of what it means to be an American. Strategies include the integration of new reading and research assignments, service learning components, and experiential learning activities.

The project team held informational meetings with several college constituencies including the president, administrative council, and academic council. In addition, the Action Plan was featured at the division of arts and sciences' April meeting, at which a lively discussion of possible course activities generated a number of ideas among them, field trips and a film series emphasizing cultural diversity. Several instructors discussed the project with their students and an article on the project was published in the college newspaper. In all cases, the goals of the project were enthusiastically received.

Team member Jeandron attended service learning sessions at the AACC annual convention in April and has arranged assignments with several agencies in the Chalmette community for students to be involved in service learning. Schools, nursing homes, a battered women's shelter, and the sheriff's office have all been receptive to the project. Placements in courses with service learning components are available to students beginning this fall.

Members of the faculty, administration, and student body representing various cultures at the college have been selected to serve on the project's newly formed advisory council. The council will select specific activities for implementation and will guide the ongoing work of the college team and the faculty as they implement change in their curriculum. *(Carol Jeandron: 504/278-7440)*

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Cumberland County College, Vineland, New Jersey...*creating a new interdisciplinary course in 20th century American culture and an American Studies option.*

Cumberland County College's team—Richard Curcio, Sharon Kewish, and Nancy Kozak—are well on their way to implementing the changes set forth in their Action Plan. President Ronald Chapdelaine reaffirmed his support for the project when the team met with him following the regional conference on American pluralism and identity.

Summer activities included development of the *20th Century American Culture* syllabus, purchasing the necessary materials and resources, and planning the American Studies option. Nancy Kozak is infusing Native American, African American, and Hispanic literature into her English courses. Sharon Kewish is including several more culturally diverse works in her *American Literature* courses and is developing a course in *20th Century American Literature*. The new courses and option will be presented for approval to the college's series of committees and faculty bodies and will be presented to the board of trustees in December 1996. The new courses and option will be ready for implementation in January 1997.

The team has kept in close contact with their mentor, Carole Edmonds, Kellogg Community College. Edmonds will make a presentation on the *Exploring America's Communities* project and Cumberland County College's role in the national initiative at a full-faculty meeting during her site visit in November. *(Nancy Kozak: 609/691-8600 x295)*

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Alpena Community College, Alpena, Michigan...*taking first steps to engender faculty involvement.*

When the Alpena Community College team—Don MacMaster, Matt Dunkel, and Sonya Titus—returned home from the regional conference on American pluralism and identity, it immediately launched a key part of its Action Plan—organizing the first of three *multi-cultural, multi-personal* evening gatherings for their faculty and community. Each session addresses a particular ethnic or cultural theme, creates a forum for learning that is both challenging and substantive, and engenders faculty interest in addressing diversity and commonality in the classroom.

The first gathering of the series, which featured the Native American experience, took place in April. Primitive skills expert Jim Miller, who served as a consultant on the Academy Award-winning movie *Dances With Wolves*, engaged attendees with a presentation suggesting that the common ground we all share is Mother Earth. Jan Miller, a retired endocrinologist, shared her remarkable life story as an Anglo raised on Indian reservations. Her memories of the respect her Native American hosts had for history, and the richness of their oral traditions were compelling.

Team member Dunkel presented his experiences as a commercial fisherman in Alaska. Using slides, charts, and graphs, he illustrated the different ways indigenous

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

and non-indigenous peoples compete for fish in the waters off the coast of Alaska. He relayed how frustrated the indigenous peoples are with outsiders who harvest resources recklessly without regard for long-term impact.

Alpena Community College is also revising two popular electives, *Children's Literature* and a four-semester journalism sequence. The team is working closely with mentor Kathy Fedorko to draft revised course syllabi and research new course materials. Fedorko visited the college in early October 1996. *(Donald MacMaster: 517/356-9021 x344)*

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Faculty at Collin County Community College, TX, gathered at the autumn welcome back meeting, at which the college's major instructional theme, Exploring America's Communities, *was announced. The evening's keynote speaker discussed changing patterns of American society and their implications for community college teachers.*

Collin County Community College, Plano, Texas...*leading a campus-wide faculty, student and staff initiative to address American pluralism and identity.*

Collin County Community College's team—David Cullen, Kay Mizell, George Rislov, Harriet Schwartz, and Debbie White—is making great strides implementing their Action Plan. Steve Ellis, Vice President of Instruction, identified the *Exploring America's Communities* project as the college's major instructional theme at this Fall's welcome back meetings for more than five hundred full-time and part-time faculty. During the meetings, faculty divided into small groups to discuss Sheldon Hackney's November 1995 address at the Community College Humanities Association's annual meeting, as well as other readings to familiarize themselves with the issues and curricular implications.

All faculty received an extensive annotated book and film list prepared by the project team with an invitation to join a reading and discussion group. The Learning Resources Center holdings now include all 115 titles on the list, many of which were culled from materials distributed at the west coast regional conference and the *Exploring America's Communities Teleconference Program Book*.

The project team has worked with the student activities and staff development offices, and the Faculty Senate to produce an extensive series of exhibits, speakers, workshops and seminars for students and faculty.

Anchoring the project's instructional efforts are two fall semester learning communities. *The Road to the White House* explores America's communities by applying sociology to politics. Professors Gary Hodge and Ted Lewis are working with their students to discover how race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, region and religion are factors contributing to the ways in which people see their political environment and view candidates and the issues.

The college is also repeating a successful spring learning community in which professors Kay Mizell and Kyle Wilkison combined rhetoric/composition and history in a course entitled *Rhetoric and the Republic* that explores the questions "Who am I?", "Who is the Other?", and "What is my community?" Coursework includes visiting community sites, practicing oral history techniques, discovering the Collin County community first-hand and exploring links to students' own lives and the American landscape.

Mentor Carole Edmonds, Kellogg Community College, will conduct a site visit on November 1. *(Harriet Schwartz: 214/881-5800)*

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Danville Area Community College, Danville, Illinois...*using oral histories to enhance understanding of diversity and commonality.*

Upon their return from AACC's west coast regional conference, Danville Area Community College team members—Melissa Bregenzer, Mary Coffman, Janet Cornelius, and Ken Leisch—held a party to brief liberal arts faculty about their experience at the conference and the Action Plan they developed. Their project involves students in compiling histories of minority communities in the Danville area, focusing on African American, Latino, and Asian American communities.

The project was piloted during the spring semester of team member Bregenzer's *Rhetoric II* (research) class. Students found that arranging interviews with sometimes reluctant community members was challenging and that transcribing

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

the resulting interviews was difficult. However, many concluded that the rewards were worth it. One student from a small area town commented, "I didn't realize how many Mexican Americans there are here ... I learned a lot." Transcriptions and student papers will be accessible to future students, local historians, the public library, and the Vermilion County Museum.

The team's presentation before the Danville Area Community College board of trustees in April resulted in a vote of confidence from the board and generated a favorable article and an editorial in the Danville *Commerical-News*. The editor praised the activities as a "worthy project."

As the fall 1996 semester begins, the team is expanding the use of interviews and minority history compilation in additional literature, history, and rhetoric classes, planning a site visit from mentor Max Reichard, and organizing an *E Pluribus Unum* celebration in November. *(Kenneth Leisch: 217/443-1811)*

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Atlanta Metropolitan College, Atlanta, Georgia... *increasing multicultural awareness at an urban, homogeneous college*

Since their return to campus from the east coast regional conference on American pluralism and identity, Atlanta Metropolitan College's project team's excitement has spread to their students, faculty and administrative colleagues. Meetings with the president and vice president for academic affairs yielded enthusiastic support for the plan to revise courses to reflect expanded multicultural content and a promise of additional financial assistance for the team. President Wade noted that the project has been widely applauded throughout the University System of Georgia, in that it supports an existing priority to increase students' awareness, understanding, and acceptance of diverse cultures.

In April, the team assembled a campus-wide Task Force on Pluralism and Diversity to discuss curriculum revision. Team members—Grady Culpepper, Ojeda Penn, and Joyce Peoples—reported on their work to select readings and conceptualize and reconceptualize the courses they will pilot during the fall quarter. As Culpepper already had a multicultural component in his *Minorities in American History* course, his work has focused on revision and expansion. Penn, on the other hand, has had to make major revisions, incorporating Asian American and Hispanic American materials and discussion into a course that has previously focused on African American culture. Penn has selected *Turbulent Voyage* (Hayes, 1992) as the new course textbook.

Peoples, team leader, has been busy referring relevant materials to faculty, coordinating meetings, making contacts to solicit project support, and writing press releases. She has scheduled a "student think tank" to identify students of diverse heritages to participate on the Task Force. As a result of her *Exploring America's Communities* work, Peoples has been asked to join the Mayor of Atlanta's Commission on Race Relations. She is also working with the city's Collegiate Council.

In addition to specific work on their Action Plan, Atlanta Metropolitan College's team members have taken time to process the AACC conference proceedings and reconsider ideas. They have held three conference calls with their mentor, Eleanor Q. Tignor, LaGuardia Community College, "who remains ever helpful and resourceful." Future meetings are planned with persons on campus and in the Atlanta community who can contribute to the success of the project. *(Joyce Peoples: 404/756-4013)*

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Hagerstown Junior College, Hagerstown, Maryland...*improving the teaching of American pluralism through faculty development activities*

Participants examine an Indian dress at Hagerstown Junior College's colloquium Who Are We At Hagerstown Junior College?, *which focused on immigrant groups at the college*

After returning from the regional conference on American pluralism and identity in Washington, DC, the Hagerstown Junior College team—Ronald Ballard, Ronald Kepple, and Marge Nikpourfard—met with faculty and staff leaders to enlist support. Nikpourfard presented an outline of the team's Action Plan to the college council, the major information dissemination vehicle for the college community. Ballard addressed the faculty senate to encourage support for direct faculty participation. The project has the continued enthusiastic endorsement of the dean of instruction who has reaffirmed institutional and financial commitment to the goals of the Action Plan.

Hagerstown Junior College's Action Plan includes a series of faculty development activities to provide the background and foundation for infusing the curriculum with common threads that bind diverse communities within the American experi-

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

ence. The first major activity, a faculty colloquium entitled *Where Are We In The Western Maryland Region?*, took place in May. A panel representing three local Appalachian cultures—African American, Mennonite, and Pennsylvania Dutch—illustrated that what sometimes appears is not what is true, and that what is significant is often not recognized.

A second faculty colloquium was held in August, this time examining diversities and commonalities within the Hagerstown Junior College learning community. Mentor Jo Marshall, Chattahoochee Valley Community College, conducted a site visit at that time, and participated in the colloquium program. The focus of *Who Are We At Hagerstown Junior College?* was recent immigrant populations. Faculty members from India, Iran, and Greece spoke about their heritage. Commonalities among the differing cultures became evident in the discussion of the value of close family bonds.

Three *Lunch and Learn* sessions are taking place during the fall 1996 term. Topics being covered are: *religious identity in America, family values and ethnicity*, and *ethnic expressions in art and music*. A third faculty colloquium will focus on the question, where are we going? It will create the next steps in continuing to infuse the college's curriculum with examples and themes of diversity and commonality. *Marge Nikpourfard 301/790-2800 x292)*

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Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Gulfport, Mississippi...*exploring American pluralism through a new film course.*

Upon their return from AACC's east coast regional conference, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College team—Henry Black, Joan Fitch, and Foster Flint—met with colleagues to share their Action Plan and garner support. They were received with enthusiasm, encouragement, and interest.

The team's Action Plan includes the creation of a new course entitled *Literature as Film* to chronicle the American experience. The course is being team-taught by Black and Fitch. The team is pleased to report that the course was filled during the second day of preregistration, and a second section was added to accommodate community members wishing to take the course at night.

In addition to this new course, the team's Action Plan calls for a series of faculty workshops to share information about multiculturalism and pluralism with their colleagues. The first workshop was held in May. Henry Black spoke on ethnic humor, Joan Fitch concentrated on the fiction of Ernest Gaines, and Dean Flint spoke about the film collection process for the new course. Bibliographies obtained at the AACC conference in March were disseminated.

A second workshop sharing clips from various films used in *Literature in Film* that examine themes of community and acceptance, was held at the district-wide fall meeting of faculty, staff, and administrators. Among the films included were *West Side Story, Apocalypse Now, Hair, Norma Rae, Philadelphia, The Joy Luck Club*, and *The Milagro Beanfield War*.

Institutional support remains strong for the team's activities as evidenced by additional financial support for the purchase of videos and library materials, release time for faculty, and excellent public relations work promoting the new course to the community. Mentor Anne Mulder, Nova Southeastern University, addressed Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College's fall administrative workshop during a site visit. *(Joan Fitch: 601/897-3793)*

Faculty at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College were introduced to films and other materials to integrate American pluralism and identity into their courses at a workshop conducted by the project team

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Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa...*emphasizing pluralism and identity through curriculum, staff development and student activities.*

Kirkwood Community College's team—Dan Tesar, Peter Jaynes, Bill Rosberg and Nicholas Wysocki—has taken necessary steps to accomplish the Action Plan. The team's first step was to create a planning committee on pluralism. The committee is composed of twenty administrators, faculty, and staff members who are charged with assuring that issues of American pluralism are being infused into curriculum, staff development programs, and student activities.

Hosting visiting scholars is a second aspect of Kirkwood's plan; the team was fortunate to schedule Terry Tafoya for a presentation to students and a faculty workshop. Dr. Tafoya is an American Indian family therapist, professor, and director of the transculture counseling program at Evergreen State College. His presentation to students focused on verbal and non-verbal issues in cross-cultural communication, and his workshop assisted faculty, staff, and administrators with teaching and understand-

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

ing people of different backgrounds and cultures.

A number of faculty and staff assisted the student learning office in hosting the college's annual Diversity Day celebration in April. Approximately 1,500 people, representing about fifty countries, participated in an ethnic food fair, ethnic dances, and a cultural information discussion session. Event organizers were excited at the increase in the number of Kirkwood employees interested in assisting with the event next year.

The unveiling of Kirkwood's Action Plan and the creation of the planning committee have stimulated campus-wide conversations about increasing pluralism in the curriculum. Various college committees are now having ongoing discussions about reviewing literature courses, reconstructing the American history curriculum, and creating a new course, *Understanding Cultures: American Pluralism*. Approximately seven hundred students completed the newly revised *Introduction to Liberal Arts* course during the summer, benefiting from the pluralism component that had been added to the course.

Team members are looking forward to mentor Virginia Meyn's site visit in October. *(Nicholas Wysocki, 319/398-5411)*

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Lee College, Baytown, Texas... *conducting faculty development workshops to encourage infusion of Mexican American literature and history into the curriculum*

Lee College's project team—John Britt, Ted Olsen, and Roberta Wright—developed an Action Plan that addresses the college's goal to serve the educational needs of its community by enhancing the faculty's ability to respond to the increasing Hispanic population among its students. The Action Plan calls for a series of workshops on campus addressing such subjects as; the importance of names, traditional *corrido* ballads, traditional healing, and death in the Mexican American culture—all of which will be compared to similar traditions in other cultures.

Many faculty members attended a workshop conducted by the Lee College team in April. The workshop addressed the importance that students give to their names. Specifically, it stressed the need for non-Spanish speaking instructors to learn basic rules of Spanish phonetics and stress in order to communicate with members of their classes without embarrassment and without causing unintended discomfort. After an introduction to the importance of naming and the Spanish vowel system, faculty members were assigned Spanish-speaking mentors with whom to practice. Response to the workshop was so positive that the team was asked to conduct individual lessons for those who were unable to attend.

The second workshop in the series, *The Ballad Tradition: Corridos*, took place in June. Mentor Carmen Salazar, Los Angeles Valley College, will conduct a site visit in the fall. *(Ted Olsen: 713/425-6433)*

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Monroe Community College, Rochester, New York...*developing a team-taught course exploring common ground in the Genesee Valley.*

"Are we excited about *common ground*? You bet we are!" says Shirley Jennings, dean of the liberal arts division of Monroe Community College. The college's team returned from the east coast regional conference filled with "uncommon enthusiasm for their *common ground* project." Team members—Jeanne Ghent, Shirley Jennings, Mary-jo Popvici, and Bob Stevens—are creating a new course entitled *Common Ground - From the Valley of the Genesee*. The course is being taught in Fall 1996 by Ghent from the English department, Popvici from communications, and Stevens from history.

The course focuses on the historic community of the Rochester/Genesee Valley region. During the second quarter of the 19th century, three events brought many changes to the region including traffic along the Erie Canal to and from Buffalo and the Great Lakes, the abolitionist movement, and the quest for women's suffrage. Students first explore these three overlapping events through reading, research, and field trips. Then they study the literature and culture of each. Finally, they examine the role the media played as these events unfolded.

The Monroe Community College team selected *The American Reader*, edited by Diane Ravitch (New York: Harper Collins, 1990) as the new course's text. The course is including speakers from the college faculty and the community. *(Shirley Jennings, 716/292-2009)*

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Rockland Community College, Suffern, New York...*developing a new interdisciplinary, team-taught course in American Latino/a culture.*

Rockland Community College's *Exploring American Communities* project team—Libby Bay, Beverly Brown, Eugenio Espinosa, and Sylvia Miranda—has established three subcommittees to deal with specific aspects of their Action Plan. The team now has fifteen additional faculty members working on revising the *American Literature* survey courses, *American History I* and *II*, and creating a new course—*American Latino/a Culture*. Faculty from many disciplines including English, sociology, history, Spanish, library, and art are involved.

As part of the Action Plan, Latino/a studies consultant Liza Fiol-Matta, LaGuardia Community College, conducted an all-day workshop for the project team, students from the course *Pluralism and Diversity*, and interested faculty. She spoke about the work of contemporary Latina poets and about Puerto Rico. The poetry, placed in a social, historical, and political context, as well as a literary one, aptly demonstrated both the beauty and frustrations of life for Latinas in the United States. The project team met with Dr. Fiol-Matta to explore ways to enhance American Latino/a culture as a presence on campus. Courses, modules, infusion, and consciousness-raising efforts were discussed. Dr. Fiol-Matta lead the group through the creation of syllabi, building assignments, and interdisciplinary teaching.

Rockland Community College's president and provost have enthusiastically en-

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

dorsed the team's activities. Funds were provided to assist the committees during the summer months, and to support special faculty development activities in the fall. Mentor Eleanor Q. Tignor will meet with the project team in October. *(Libby Bay: 914/574-4000)*

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Tulsa Junior College, Tulsa, Oklahoma...*infusing the search for common ground into faculty and curriculum development.*

Kathy Purser, Chris Myers-Baker, and Cherie Hughes, the Tulsa Junior College team, are successfully executing the Action Plan they developed at the regional conference in March. The college's plan consists of activities to promote professional development, curriculum development, and institutional awareness of American pluralism and identity.

Motlow College, TN, students and faculty from the newly-developed American Studies honors class, The Story of Family, *visited the Walker Sisters' Cabin in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. The course examines "the family" at personal, regional, and national levels to discover what brings Americans together.*

The team's primary Action Plan goal is to initiate a monthly faculty/staff study group entitled *Conversations on American Culture* to discuss materials and issues of American pluralism and identity and to encourage the infusion of multicultural materials into curriculum across the disciplines. The group has already exchanged multicultural bibliographies and reviewed the book *Freedom* by Orlando Patterson. In July, the group held a facilitated discussion of American core values. In September, the group discussed Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

The Action Plan also calls for dialogue with other college constituencies about the inclusion of American pluralism and identity topics in their coursework, and an evaluation of Tulsa Junior College's new course, *Introduction to American Humanities*.

Immediately upon their return from the conference, the team briefed college president Dean VanTrease on their Action Plan and obtained a place on the board of regents' May meeting agenda. The presentation to the board was well received and support for the Action Plan was expressed. The team also met with student activities chairs and student leaders from all four campuses, producing a great deal of enthusiasm among the group to participate in future college-wide pluralism activities.

Mentor Robert Sessions, Kirkwood Community College, will conduct a site visit in November. His visit will coincide with a meeting of the study group at which he will make a presentation and lead the discussion. Two other guest speakers are scheduled to speak at the study group meetings: *Exploring America's Communities* resource persons Sharon Harley, University of Maryland, and Lawana Trout, Newberry Library, will discuss African American and Native American materials, respectively. *(Kathy Purser: 918/595-7460)*

Southeast Community College, Cumberland, Kentucky...*integrating American pluralism and identity into existing humanities curricula.*

The Southeast Community College team—Harry Bralley, Joe Marcum, and Margaret Marcum—has made significant progress in bringing the goals of their project to faculty at the college's main campus and its Bell County Campus. The team's Action Plan includes revising the curriculum of the two American history survey courses and conducting faculty development workshops to begin the process in other courses.

An e-mail list has been established to inform all faculty at the Bell County Campus of each pertinent resource as it is acquired, ie. the *Exploring America's Communities Teleconference* video. Each faculty member is receiving articles that deal with issues of commonality in their specific discipline. In addition, weekly updates on related activities are provided via a campus-wide voice-mail system.

The team introduced their Action Plan to the entire faculty at their monthly meeting in April. They challenged their colleagues to infuse American pluralism and identity issues and resources into their curricula. The team also met individually with faculty from the English, sociology, art, psychology and developmental departments to share methods they can use to emphasize themes of diversity and commonality in their classrooms.

Articles describing the college's involvement in the AACC project and their specific plans have been submitted to the college's *President's Update* and the local newspaper *Middleboro Daily News*. The team has maintained a close relationship with the in-house publicity committee during all stages of the project.

The collection of resource materials for use in different classes is proceeding at

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A Work in Progress, *continued*

insulting terms into opportunities to advance the conversation. The classroom can be a place of real communication, without the media mantras of oversimplification and polarization. The classroom can be a place of sustained critical discourse on the significant texts, topics and issues of American pluralism and identity.

The subtitle of our project was chosen carefully and deliberately: *In Quest of Common Ground*. What do we Americans have in common? The quest is as important as the conclusions. As you work in the next year on this project, you will seek and hopefully find the common ground.

David A. Berry is Executive Director, Community College Humanities Association and Professor of History, Essex County College.

CCHA Regional Conferences are taking place throughout the fall. Call 215/751-8860 for a schedule.

News, *continued*

a steady pace. One new addition is the public television broadcasts, *Different and the Same*, which were used during spring semester in both education and children's literature courses.

A mini-grant proposal to fund the purchase of additional books and videos for the library has been submitted to the University of Kentucky Community College System. The team anticipates a favorable outcome reflecting support at the system level. *(Joe Marcum: 606/242-2145)*

News From NEH

Dear Colleagues:

Let me begin with a reminder that new guidelines for the NEH Research and Education Division, Education Development and Demonstration grants, are now available. Some programs, like ***Humanities Focus Grants***, are continuing with new deadlines—September 16 and **April 18** for this academic year—and some new and revised opportunities are available at the October 1 deadline. Proposals that seek to strengthen humanities teaching through the use of technology may be submitted as *Humanities Focus Grants* or *Education Development and Demonstration Grants* and sent to us at the appropriate deadline. **You can receive a copy of the new guidelines by calling 202/606-8380** and requesting them; by writing to us at 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20506; or by downloading them from the NEH Web site, http://www.neh.fed.us. We look forward to hearing from you!

We have just announced the names of the institutions receiving grants in the special *Teaching with Technology* competition held last spring. *Exploring America's Communities* colleges will receive a copy of the press release in the mail. You may also find a list of the awards on the NEH homepage. To say that this was an unusually competitive round is an understatement; approximately 307 applications resulted in only twelve awards. We hope that this funding ratio will improve over the three-year life of this special initiative. We are very excited about these project, and I know that many of you have projects of your own. We look forward to working with you.

There are new programs and new deadlines throughout the Endowment. Of special interest are:

- ***Projects for Public Programs***, December 6, 1996 (call 202/606-8267 for more information)
- **Applications to attend *NEH Summer Institutes/Seminars for College Teachers***, March 1, 1997 (call NOW for the poster, 202/606-8463)
- **Applications for *Challenge Grants***, May 1, 1997 (call 202/606-8309)

I am delighted with the exciting work that AACC colleges are doing in the *Exploring America's Communities* project. The **April 18, 1997**, deadline might well provide opportunities for funding to extend your good work. Let us know how we can help! Our number is 202/606-8380.

Cordially,
Judy Jeffrey Howard, Program Officer
Division of Research and Education

Early Observations on the National Conversation, *continued*

Dr. Hackney offered an explanation of Americans' sense of powerlessness:

- Americans have not come to terms with changes that occurred during the sixties; multiple stories have replaced the single story about America, and we don't know how to bring them together.
- The global economy demonstrates that there are forces the United States cannot control.
- Technological change is both promising and problematic.
- The end of the Cold War has resulted in an undefined new world order.

Dr. Hackney summarized his comments as follows:

- Solution lies in renewal and revitalization of democracy. The National Conversation helps analyze what ails us, and the process itself is part of the solution.
- There are many tensions and paradoxes, chief among them that of *the one and the many*. How to bridge these two, individualism and communitarianism, at the same time, is the difficult issue.

How do Dr. Hackney's observations concur with the conversations you are having at your college? Let us hear from you...your responses will appear in the next issue of *In Quest of Common Ground.*

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Highlights in Brief...

Carroll Community College (MD) is revamping the college's current American Studies concentration by establishing closer ties among the faculty who teach courses required for the concentration, conducting a series of faculty development workshops, and creating an interdisciplinary course, *A Sense of Place* ... **Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College** (SC) is developing a strategy for linking two courses, *American History* and *American Literature* on the theme "common ground" ... **Harrisburg Area Community College** (PA) is enriching the English curriculum with American pluralism materials via curriculum planning meetings and faculty development seminars ... **Northampton Community College** (PA) is continuing its series of conversations with a discussion of African American writings with Michael Eric Dyson, director, University of North Carolina's Institute of African American Research and a meeting with Laurie Grobner, Lehigh University, whose work centers on pedagogical strategies for teaching contemporary American ethnic women's fiction ... **Rancho Santiago College** (CA) is following up its successful implementation of the classroom project *American Pluralism in Microcosm: The City of Santa Ana as Text* in last spring's honors history class by including the module in the fall offerings of two additional courses, *Mexican American History* and *English 101* ... **San Antonio College** (TX) is preparing for the first of four new team-taught courses, *American Pluralism and Identity*, to be offered in the spring semester of 1997. Team members Dawn Elmore-McCrary, Clyde Hudgins, and Nora McMillan, have coauthored a team teaching manual ... **Santa Rosa Junior College** (CA) has convened a steering committee to develop a campus-wide forum on American pluralism and identity to be held during the 1997 spring semester, and created a faculty study group focusing on American cultures ... **Tyler Junior College** (TX) has launched a new course, *The American Experiment*, bringing together American history and composition to examine the threads of the American tapestry ... **West Los Angeles College** (CA) team members have developed supplementary readings booklets for the history and English portions of an interdisciplinary PARTNERS program that emphasizes documents addressing the question *What is an American?*

Talk to Me: Americans in Conversation

A New American Pluralism Resource

Talk to Me: Americans in Conversation is a new National Conversation film commissioned by NEH. Scheduled for an early 1997 debut, the hour-long television program will be broadcast nationally on PBS. It will be accompanied by a short discussion-starter video, a resource guide for community and classroom use, training workshops for conversation leaders, and regional premiere screenings.

The film is produced by Arcadia Pictures, a New York-based educational film and video production company. Study Circles Resource Center, facilitators of the *Day of Dialogue* held following the O.J. Simpson verdict, is collaborating with Arcadia on development of the resource guide and video.

Additional funding was provided by the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Surdna Foundation.

For ordering information call the Cinema Guild at 212/246-5522 or send e-mail to thecinemag@aol.com.

American Association of Community Colleges
Exploring America's Communities Project
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036
202/728-0200

Editor: Diane U. Eisenberg
Associate Editor: Nadya Labib

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EXPRESSION COMMUNITIES OF PLACE

In Quest of Common Ground

A FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER OF THE EXPLORING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Issue 4 | A publication of the American Association of Community Colleges | January 1997

From the Editors:

During the past year, *In Quest of Common Ground* has reported on the accomplishments of forty-one community colleges participating in *Exploring America's Communities*, a project supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity.

We hope that it has been a useful resource for faculty and administrators as they strive to help their students, faculty colleagues and, indeed, themselves think about and better understand the myriad complexities inherent in the questions, "what does it mean to be an American?", "what divides us?", "what brings us together?", "what do we have in common?"

The many and varied programs developed by these colleges to address this question will be presented in an AACC publication to be released and broadly distributed in March 1997. (If you do not receive a copy, contact the Community College Press, PO Box 311, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701, 800/250-6557.)

The publication is intended as a resource to encourage and assist other colleges as they engage their students, faculty, and communities in similar explorations of our commonalities...in quests for common ground that hold the promise of bringing Americans—all Americans—together as a country.

This issue of *In Quest of Common Ground* and the above-referenced publication bring the *Exploring America's Communities* project to a formal close. Its purposes and work, however, will continue on community college campuses and in the communities they serve nationwide.

Exploring America's Communities Colleges Report on Progress at National Conference

Exploring America's Communities participating colleges reconvene at the National Conference on American Pluralism and Identity, January 18-19, in New Orleans. Project teams will report on their progress, discuss challenges, and plan the continuation of their work to integrate ideas and materials on American pluralism and identity into their curriculum.

The centerpiece of the conference is a set of panel presentations to address four ways in which the forty-one participating colleges are transforming curriculum. Given the impressive work accomplished by all the participating colleges, the panel selection process was difficult. Fortunately, the conference provides ample opportunities for all colleges to share their accomplishments at small group discussions.

Discussion leaders include Jo Marshall, Chattahoochee Valley Community College; Max Reichard, Delgado Community College; Rebecca Seaman, Southern Union Community College; Robert Sessions, Kirkwood Community College; Eleanor Q. Tignor, LaGuardia Community College; and George Vaughan, Academy for Community College Leadership Advancement, Innovation and Modeling. The four panel presentations are:

Creating New Courses on American Pluralism and Identity, with panelists from: Lakeland Community College, OH; Rockland Community College, NY; Indian Hills Community College, IA; Metropolitan Community Colleges, MO; Cumberland County College, NJ; and Motlow State Community College, TN.

Integrating American Pluralism and Identity Topics into Existing Courses, with panelists from: Bronx Community College, NY; Collin County Community College, TX; Santa Rosa Junior College, CA; and Carroll Community College, MD.

Conducting Faculty Development Activities on American Pluralism and Identity Topics, with panelists from: Tarrant County Junior College, TX; Tulsa Junior College, OK; Bergen Community College, NJ; and Northampton Community College, PA.

Companion Activities: Engaging the Community in Conversations about American Pluralism and Identity, with panelists from: Danville Area Community College, IL; Hudson County Community College, NJ; Nunez Community College, LA; and Black River Technical College, AR.

The conference, co-chaired by Diane U. Eisenberg, project director, and David Berry, executive director, Community College Humanities Association, will also include a workshop on NEH funding opportunities available to community colleges and a special showing of the NEH-commissioned documentary film *Talk to Me: Americans in Conversation*.

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Exploring America's Communities is a project of the American Association of Community Colleges, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and conducted in cooperation with the Community College Humanities Association and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society

Service Learning and the Humanities

Partners in the Quest for Common Ground

by Robert Franco

Two current national initiatives—service learning and the National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity—are natural partners for creating the common ground necessary to bring people together across the divides of race and ethnicity. At Kapi'olani Community College we have found many ways to link these two initiatives—ways that are remarkably consistent with the goals of AACC's *Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground* project.

Establishing a Common Ground Climate

By *common ground* we refer to a sense of social interconnectedness, even solidarity. It is achieved through active participation and decision-making based on cooperative values that are translated into responsible action. The pedagogy of common ground combines the expertise of the teacher with student-centered active learning. Teachers must recognize that students bring a wide array of values, norms and beliefs into their classrooms. They must see this diversity of experience and perspective as a strength and then work to create consensus on the values of cooperative interaction, and joint responsibility for maximum learning. My syllabi frequently highlight the statement, "we are all in this together."

In an inclusive common ground curriculum all students see their reflections. Students explore the historical and sociocultural processes that shape their identities as individual men or women, as members of local, cultural, ethnic or racial groups, and as Americans. Actively, cooperatively and responsibly, they explore, "What do we have in common? What divides us? What brings us together?"

Integrating Service Learning into the Humanities

Our ability to create common ground in the wider community can be greatly enhanced if we integrate service learning into our humanities courses. Service learning is an experiential educational pedagogy in which faculty assist students to develop meaningful community service activities that inform course curriculum. After early semester discussions with their instructors, students arrange with a community-based site supervisor to provide services within a community agency setting, or develop their own service projects to enhance their understanding of course curriculum. Students perform twenty or more hours of service during which they maintain a critical, reflective journal linking their community service experience to the curriculum. Throughout the semester, students and their instructor interact closely to make the curricular connections.

Service and Civic Responsibility

At Kapi'olani Community College, our service learning program presents service as the civic responsibility of an educated citizenry and explores how the values inherent in service are reflected in contemporary Hawaii's multicultural society. We are currently integrating service learning into three cross-curricular areas, *Asian-Pacific Studies, Writing/Thinking and Reasoning*, and *Information Technology*. A major objective of our service learning program is to provide cross-cultural and intergenerational service learning opportunities for our students so that they can build and maintain a civil, pluralistic society.

Students in humanities classes such as *Philosophy: Asian Traditions*, and *Philosophy: Ethics in Health Care* provide meaningful service to community organizations and reflect on the philosophical basis of ethics and service in various Asian traditions (see Fujikawa, in *Disciplinary Pathways to Service Learning*, Brophy, ed., Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges, Mesa, AZ, 1997).

Service and History, English

In world history courses, service learning students have provided companionship in convalescent homes or to the homebound elderly where they develop reflective journals based on the respected elder's life history. Students in English composition classes also serve as companions to the elderly while developing multicultural children's stories based on the elder's life history. These stories will be produced, with the help of art students, into new vivid texts and performed as directed readings by students in remedial- and college-level reading courses for local pre-school and elementary school students.

In Hawaiian history courses, Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students serve as room guards at Iolani Palace. The 104-room palace was constructed in 1882 by Hawaii's last male monarch, King David Kalakaua. Students hear numerous representations of late nineteenth century Hawaiian history from docents with different story lines and areas of expertise. They frequently observe Hawaiian, American and Japanese visitors as they tour the palace, and then reflect in their journals on the ways in which different cultures respond to Hawaiian history.

Service and Honors Courses

Service learning has also been integrated into our honors seminars, *Honors 150: Global Village or Villages: Communication, Technology and Multiculturalism*. In the spring of 1995, Phi Theta Kappa students completed their service requirement by working on the Polynesian Voyaging Society's multimedia education project. The Polynesian sailing canoe is a major contemporary symbol of unity and common ground for all Polynesian peoples.

In my cultural anthropology course, we examine different theoretical orientations to the concept of culture, biological versus social uses of race, situational and instrumental uses of racial and ethnic categories, and the marginalizing impacts of racial and ethnic discrimination. My service learning students work with the newly marginalized, the illiterate, adolescents with children, the HIV-positive, the homeless and hungry, and the elderly. In our conversations about their reflective journals, I challenge them to cast away their rigid, sometimes ugly stereo-

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News from Participating Community Colleges

What does it mean to be an American? What divides us? What brings us together? What do we have in common? *Work to integrate these questions into the teaching and learning of American history, literature, and culture is underway at community colleges participating in AACC's* Exploring America's Communities: In Quest of Common Ground *project. Enthusiastic reports from college team members indicate that the forty-one colleges are making great strides toward infusing ideas and materials on American pluralism and identity into their classrooms. Here are stories on their progress:*

Carroll Community College, Westminster, Maryland...*expanding and enhancing the college's American Studies program.*

When Carroll Community College's team—Ann Weber, Bob Young, and Faye Pappalardo—began working on their plan to enhance the college's American Studies program, they hoped to find ways to link the courses required for the concentration and to begin a recruitment process to encourage enrollment in the program. However, over the last few months their original vision has greatly expanded and promises to eventually change Carroll Community College in a major way. Their expanded Action Plan, inspired by the title of the *Exploring America's Communities* project, calls for creating a learning community of students and faculty.

The Action Plan called for developing a set of themes dealing with American plurality and identity that would be emphasized in all courses required for the American Studies major. As the faculty members who teach these courses identified these themes, they realized how useful it would be to share activities dealing with the themes—American dream/destiny, the Puritan ethic, the migration experience, regionalism and rootedness, egalitarianism, individualism, and pluralism. Group member Larry Fask suggested putting required American Studies courses together into a time block to reinforce the themes and to make cooperative activities easier to accomplish. Jo Marshall, Carroll Community College's mentor, faculty members, and administrators discussed this proposal. Enthusiasm grew to the point that by the end of Dr. Marshall's mentor visit, all were committed to putting this new plan into effect in Fall 1997.

Beginning with their first semester in college, students who elect to be part of the new American Studies concentration will, as a group, take all of the required courses for the major, in addition to their other college requirements. These courses will be offered in a time block each semester and taught by a faculty team that will meet regularly to plan joint activities, field trips, and other activities to foster a sense of community. These faculty teams will work together both before and during each semester to create innovative methods of presenting their material and assessing student achievement.

Carroll Community College team members Ann Weber, Bob Young (top right) and Faye Pappalardo (lower right) discuss their Action Plan with college president Joseph Shields (lower left) and participating faculty members Suzanne Dixon and Larry Fask (upper left).

The block of courses for Fall 1997, will be *English 101*, *Sociology 101*, and *A Sense of Place*, the new interdisciplinary course currently being developed as another component of the team's Action Plan. Faculty members who will be teaching these courses are already discussing ways to share not only assignments, but also text books. The research paper in *English 101* will be on a topic dealing with one of the general American Studies themes as it applies to the subject matter of sociology. A book of readings dealing with American themes will be used in both *English 101* and the interdisciplinary course. The blocked courses are already scheduled for 8:00-11:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for Fall 1997. Students and faculty members will be encouraged to have lunch together as well, to continue discussions begun during class sessions and to accomplish the kind of bonding that should create a true community of learners. The team also intends to designate a place on campus as a gathering place for American Studies majors.

The benefits of this approach are widespread. A large number of students who are planning to transfer to four year colleges choose general studies as their area of concentration because they are not sure what they want to do. American Studies is a much better alternative to general studies because it demonstrates focus in class selection, provides a comprehensive introduction to academic life, and breaks down barriers between courses as students recognize how American plurality and identity are basic themes in their studies. In addition, as students become part of a community of learners, they should feel more comfortable in college and more highly motivated to do well, finish their AA degrees, and continue on for bachelor's degrees.

Faculty members will promote the program when they accompany college recruiters to area high schools this spring. In addition, American Studies faculty will hold a combination business and social event for high school teachers to inform them about the program and to encourage them to recommend it to their students. Students who wish to take part in the program will be asked to apply by April 1 so that they can register as a group, with American Studies faculty as their advisors.

Planning for this program has created a new sense of excitement and dedication among the faculty members involved. They are looking forward to kindling this same sense of excitement in their students. *(Ann Weber: 410/876-9655)*

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Motlow State Community College, Tullahoma, Tennessee...*developing an honors American Studies course in history, literature, and culture with emphasis on the Appalachian region.*

Motlow State Community College's team—Michael Bradley, Jeannette Palmer, and Mary McLemore—is making exciting progress implementing its Action Plan. This semester honors students have studied the cultural diversity of their Appalachian area in a new team-taught course, *Honors 102: American Studies*, that satisfies curriculum requirements in both history and English. The class meets for two consecutive periods on Tuesdays and Thursdays and carries six credit-hours.

American Studies students survey U.S. history, literature, and culture using examples from the Appalachian setting as frequently as possible and emphasizing the role that Appalachia played on the national scene. The course theme is *story as history, history as story*; its objective is to tell the story of the nation, the region, and the students' own families and heritage. Diversity within the region is emphasized since Appalachia has always included Native, African and European American inhabitants. Finding appropriate readings for student assignments and determining the balance between national and regional materials and presentations was a challenge for the team.

Guest speakers have been featured along with regular class lectures, discussions, and activities. Field trips included visits to Indian and pioneer sites in and around the Great Smoky Mountains and the historic town of Franklin, TN, site of an important Civil War battle. On campus, students participated in Motlow State Community College's annual *Storytelling Festival and Workshop*. As a culminating project, students researched a character in history or one from their own heritage, assumed the persona of that character, and presented this "living story" at an Honors Symposium. During the Festival, the students worked with a professional storyteller to hone their presentation skills. With this course's emphasis on research, study, and student involvement, history and story came alive. *(Mary McLemore: 615/393-1700)*

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Hudson County Community College, Jersey City, New Jersey...*enhancing developmental English courses through oral history.*

Hudson County Community College's team—Jani Decena-White, George Satterfield, Rosie Soy, and Barry Tomkins—developed an Action Plan to integrate cultural diversity into their developmental English classes. Upon their return from AACC's regional conference on American pluralism and identity, the team presented its goals at an English, humanities and social science division meeting, receiving an enthusiastic response. Ellen Renaud of the Learning Resource Center gave the team a list of available primary source materials in American history and literature. Faculty members suggested documents on the dual themes of unity and diversity for the reader text that the team is developing for *Foundations* (remedial) English students.

Jani Decena-White moved the project along with her work on *Our Story*, an oral history module that will soon be challenging *Foundations* students to ponder the diversity and unity of American culture through the history of their own families. A mock interview was conducted in *Foundations* class with project team member Barry Tomkins as the guinea pig. The students enjoyed the assignment and their interviewee, who like several of them, is an immigrant to the United States!

The rest of the team has devoted its time and energies to making selections for the course reader and heightening faculty awareness of the project through a series of workshops. Among the authors and key documents to be included in the reader are: *The Bill of Rights*; Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*; Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*; Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*; Studs Terkel, *Working*. In November, two faculty development workshops were held; George Satterfield lead the first on how social history documents can enhance critical thinking skills and Rosie Soy lead the second on the subject of Asian American literature.

Team mentor Charles Errico conducted a site visit in November. He met with President Gabert, Vice President of Academic Affairs Abegail Johnson and members of the English faculty. He observed developmental English classes and addressed a division meeting during which Jani Decena-White made a computer presentation of her work on the oral history component of her course. *(Barry Tomkins: 201/714-2156)*

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Lakeland Community College, Kirtland, Ohio...*creating a college task force on American pluralism to guide curricular change.*

Lakeland Community College's team—Meryl Schwartz, Rollie Santos, and Larry Aufderheide—has made strong progress on the goals set forth in its Action Plan. Not only have they been busy completing planned tasks, but they have accomplished some things they hadn't planned on. The surprises illustrate what can happen when an exciting project brings new people together.

The first goal of the plan, establishing a new course in multicultural literary studies, has been achieved. Curriculum committee approval was obtained in late April. The course was held during fall quarter, 1996. Posters were distributed, a promotional piece was printed in the college course schedule, and fliers were distributed to faculty.

The new course is designed to allow different thematic emphases each time it is taught. For the kick-off version this fall, the theme was *Growing Up in America*. A variety of readings, films and videos were assigned. Students surveyed the rich multiplicity of American experiences and compared them to their personal backgrounds. As stated in the new catalog description, "The course will address questions of social cohesion and division; the effects of history and social systems on individual experience; and the way literature and film both reflect and shape our perceptions of ourselves and members of different cultural groups." The course will take its place as a literature survey in the English department's curriculum, allowing students to meet degree and transfer requirements, as well as gain knowledge in a new area.

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According to plan, the team met with the college's major joint academic planning council in May and requested that a *Task Force on American Pluralism* be formed. Approval was unanimous, with task force members beginning work during Fall 1996 to identify current instructional activity in multicultural studies, to plan faculty development activities, and to coordinate academic, continuing education, and student activities programming.

Meryl Schwartz, also a member of the college's cultural diversity committee, was able to enlist Naomi Tutu, daughter of Archbishop (emeritus) Desmond Tutu, as a featured campus speaker in November. In addition to speaking to a class and giving a public lecture on current South African politics, Ms. Tutu gave a luncheon presentation to faculty and staff involved in Lakeland Community College's AACC project. Her talk was titled *Multicul-tural Education in the United States and South Africa: A Comparison of the Challenges*.

Work on establishing a resource center for curricular materials is underway. Accomplishing a fifth goal of the Action Plan, Rollie Santos designed a faculty survey questionnaire, disseminated it, analyzed the responses, and reported his findings to the faculty. Analysis suggested strong interest in improving courses in all divisions; a number of faculty submitted syllabi and assignments revealing the level of work they already do in this field. Santos joined a panel led by Meryl Schwartz at a faculty workshop titled *Pluralism and Pedagogy: Developing Multicultural Curricula for Lakeland Classrooms*.

Each year Lakeland Community College gives a Cultural Diversity Award to a faculty or staff member who has given exemplary service in advancing diversity at the college. Team member Larry Aufderheide received the award for 1996. As with all such awards, any attendant praise should not go to a single individual. Aufderheide believes, but to everyone working together who make progress possible. *(Larry Aufderheide: 216/953-7091)*

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Metropolitan Community Colleges, Kansas City, Missouri...*exploring regional diversity and commonality through a new interdisciplinary course.*

Metropolitan Community Colleges' team enrolled thirty-six students in the fall semester offering of their new course, *Humanities 161: Exploring the American Experience*. This course, a project of the district-wide Diversity Committee, was offered for the first time at the Maple Woods campus. Units for the course include study of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and the European settlers, with particular emphasis on issues of pluralism and diversity in the Midwest. Women's issues and political activities have also been discussed. The history text is Takaki's *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* and the literature texts are Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek*, Cather's *My Antonia*, Hughes' *Not Without Laughter*, and Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*.

Metropolitan Community College (MO) students discuss American pluralism and identity issues in small groups.

The team, composed of Albert Dimmitt, Sr., Beverlye Brown, Mary Kitterman, and Mark Lidman, represents the disciplines of history and literature. The team has invited guest speakers from the community and from the college to supplement the texts and lectures. Appearing were Mindy McCallum (Hispanic culture), Eleanor Bowie (African American literature), Kevin Kennedy (African American history) and Lynn Ragan (Native American music and culture). The class attended a reading by N. Scott Momaday at an American Studies conference held in Kansas City.

Project mentor Max Reichard, Delgado Community College, visited the team in mid-November, meeting with several college administrators who are key members of the college's instructional unit. In addition, he attended the class meeting and a workplace diversity training session. *(Mary Kitterman: 816/437-3173)*

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Valencia Community College, Orlando, Florida...*creating a "common ground" teaching model that fosters conversations about American pluralism across the disciplines.*

A series of civil conversations about diversity is the aim of Valencia Community College's team—Philip Bishop, Daniel Dutkofski, and Kevin Mulholland. To foster these conversations, the team has developed a structured "common ground" lesson plan that can be adapted for classes in different disciplines. For example, in a government class, students discuss a scenario involving conflicting rights. In humanities classes, the discussion topic is religious tolerance and intolerance in the Middle Ages.

At the heart of each activity is an intensive small-group discussion where students must explore the diversity within their individual ideas and backgrounds. The common ground team has worked closely with a core group of cooperating faculty to integrate these diversity activities into already existing curricula. By working with the common ground lesson model, cooperating faculty are seeing their course topics in a new light...as opportunities for their students to explore multiple perspectives, actively and cooperatively.

Valencia Community College's *Exploring America's Communities* project has also sponsored conversations of a broader and more public kind. This fall semester saw the inauguration of diversity forums. The first forum brought together panels of experts on affirmative action, and engaged

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student and faculty audiences in wide-ranging conversations on diversity and justice. Next semester's forums will consider the issue of *Immigration: Order and Borders*.

By collaborating with colleagues and giving voice to students, the Valencia Community College team is creating conversations about diversity at the very grassroots of the Valencia community. *(Philip Bishop 407/299-5000)*

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Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College, Cheraw, South Carolina...*infusing history and literature courses with common ground themes.*

The Chesterfield-Marlboro Technical College team—Diane Winburn, Richard Moorman, and Carole Hennessee—has completed its plan to implement a history/literature project for the spring 1997 semester. Courses in U.S. history and American literature that focus on the later nineteenth century and the twentieth century have been infused with common ground and pluralism/diversity themes. Instructors for both courses will include studies of historical and literary parallels, Native, African, European, Asian, and Hispanic Americans, with emphasis on commonality as well as the benefits and richness of cultural diversity.

The history course addresses representative immigrant groups and their effects on a common American culture. The literature course introduces students to modern American writers of varying cultural heritage whose works may not typically be included in a literature survey anthology.

To supplement these courses, the team has added a one-semester-hour seminar course to the curriculum, *History 203: Special Topics - History*. This seminar will be led by history and literature instructors. Students will meet for a one-hour weekly class to discuss, interpret, and analyze what it means to be an American. A list of speakers has been developed, audio-visual resources selected, and library holdings evaluated for use in this seminar. Over the fifteen-week period, students will come to recognize common unifying themes of the American experience. *(Carole C. Hennessee: 803/921-6970)*

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Iowa Central Community College, Fort Dodge, Iowa...*gaining faculty support for a new "common ground" team-taught course through staff development activities.*

Iowa Central Community College's team—Bette Conkin, Mary Sula Linney and Roger Natte—is on a roll! AACC's regional conference on American pluralism and identity in Los Angeles added the necessary sparks to rekindle their enthusiasm for a dormant idea.

Faculty participants share ideas about American pluralism and identity during an August staff development retreat.

In Fall 1995, the team and some of their students had participated in the *Exploring America's Communities* teleconference. Students' reactions to the teleconference indicated there was a real need to infuse ideas and materials on American pluralism and identity into the classroom. The team began conversations on the approach to be taken. It seemed that a team-taught, cross disciplinary course involving history and literature would find broad support among both students and faculty. However, as each of the team members found themselves involved in other institutional commitments, the seeds of development for the new course did not begin to sprout until the AACC conference.

Upon arriving home, plans for hosting mentor Elizabeth Brown-Guillory were put into place. Her visit was scheduled in conjunction with a special staff development day retreat in August, at which the team's Action Plan was introduced to the faculty.

The common ground retreat was held at the First Presbyterian Church with forty faculty and community members in attendance, including the leadership of a newly formed Fort Dodge community diversity group, which the team members had joined. After lunch, during which ethnic music of Iowa was played, participants broke into small groups to discuss issues of commonality and diversity as found in the classroom. Each group then presented the key points of their discussions to the larger group. This set the tone for mentor Elizabeth Brown-Guillory's powerful literary presentation. The retreat ended with a recap of the team's Action Plan.

During the fall the team spent many hours developing specifics of the new course and identifying suitable materials. Based on the concept that all Americans regardless of ethnicity are searching for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the course explores the commonalities found among groups in their search for these ideals. A service learning component is also included. At all levels of the curriculum development process the team has found strong support among faculty members from other disciplines. The groundwork for this support was laid during the retreat. The course will be taught for the first time in Fall 1997. Team members will continue to be a part of the community diversity group and they will seek funding to bring in nationally-known speakers for community outreach events. *(Mary Sula Linney 515/576-7201 x2624)*

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Northampton Community College, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania...*conducting professional development opportunities for humanities and social science faculty.*

Northampton Community College is successfully implementing its AACC/NEH project to reflect American pluralism in the college's American literature courses and composition courses by including more works by African American, Asian American, Latino/Latina, and Native American writers. To accomplish this objective, team members—Jim Benner, Sharon Levy, Len Roberts, and Doreen Smith—offered a se-

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News from Participating Community Colleges, *continued*

ries of professional development programs for faculty this fall and are arranging similar programs for the spring. Fall offerings, intended to provide faculty with recommended works and teaching strategies, included a talk on Native Americans, a lecture and discussion on African American life and culture, and a presentation and workshop on African American literature.

Dr. Peter Beidler, professor of English at Lehigh University and an authority on Native American literature, conducted both a morning and afternoon session for humanities and social science faculty. Dr. Beidler discussed pedagogical approaches to Native American literature, concentrating on twentieth century novels; he also presented extremely useful bibliographical material. The sources highlighted have now been added to the college library.

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, noted African American scholar, presented a lecture, *Between God and Gangsta Rap*, as part of the college's Cohen lecture series. Following the lecture, Dyson met with the project team and suggested ways to incorporate conversations on pluralism into composition courses. He recommended specific works that can be used together and discussed methodologies that facilitate connections and conversations among students.

As a part of a two-day professional development program at the college, Dr. Eleanor Tignor, English professor at LaGuardia Community College and *Exploring America's Communities* project mentor, presented a full-day program for humanities and social science faculty. Dr. Tignor's morning session, *An Historical Overview of African American Literature*, included a discussion of major periods, peaks, and authors. In the afternoon session, Dr. Tignor talked briefly about the *Exploring America's Communities* project and then reviewed African American literature course outlines, identified works to include in courses and reflected upon course assignments and ways of engaging students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In October, team members Len Roberts and Doreen Smith discussed the project on WDIY, the local public radio station. A session on pedagogical research conducted by Laurie Grobman of Lehigh University on multi-ethnic sources for all the English faculty also took place this fall.

With guidance from mentor Beccie Seaman, Southern Union Community College, the team is developing assessment measures for the project. Northampton faculty enjoyed all of these professional development opportunities. Sharing the experience, background, and research of each presenter enriched the faculty and contributed greatly to the project's goal. *(Doreen Smith: 610/861-5312)*

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Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California...*a multi-component approach to generating conversations about American pluralism and identity.*

Santa Rosa Junior College's team—Marty Bennett, Cott Hobart, and Ron Taylor—began meetings last spring with various campus groups and individuals, toward the goal of establishing an American Cultures program at the college. The program would consist of three principal parts: a public lecture series, a learning community course, and a faculty study group. Ultimately, a service learning component is envisioned. The key to the success of the program is interdepartmental cooperation and sharing of resources and ideas across a large, complex institution.

The first public lecture series is planned for Spring 1997. The seven lectures will be held in a 200-seat auditorium that accommodates students, interested faculty, and members of the community. Some of the students attending will actually be enrolled in a one-unit course organized around the lectures; these students will attend additional discussion and planning sessions, and write at least one paper in response to the lectures. Although these events are being called lectures, they will expand beyond traditional lecture format. For example, one event will be a performance-enhanced lecture with musical illustrations entitled *Soul: From Plato to Motown—An Exploration of Formalism and the Myth of the "Devil's Music"*; another will be concert and discussion with gospel singers, and a third will be a panel discussion, *American Voices*, with faculty respondents. The theme for the lecture series is *E Pluribus Unum: Cultural Diversity and American Identity*. It is being given special highlighting in the college's spring schedule of classes.

Along with the spring lecture series, a learning community course, *Declarations of Independence: Culture and Conflict in the Formation of American Identity*, is scheduled. This course was first offered during the fall '96 semester. The class filled quickly. Instructors Lori Kuwabara and Andre LaRue found teaching this class a truly energizing experience. The course combines credit for *English 1A: Freshman Composition and Reading* and *History 21: Race, Ethnicity and Gender in American Culture*. The learning community meets for seven hours each week and focuses on the very issues that will be central to the lecture series. Students enrolled in this course will be required to attend the lecture series and will constitute a well-informed core audience for each event.

The third aspect of the program, the faculty study group, met three times during the fall '96 semester, reading and discussing David Hollinger's *PostEthnic America* and several essays by James Baldwin focusing on Baldwin's perspective on American identity as an African American who lived in Europe for many years. Meetings will continue into spring and members will be encouraged to pick up on themes that emerge in the larger discussions with students and community members at the lecture series. The hope is that the faculty study group can serve as a place for in-depth, focused study that both feeds into and follows through on issues about which students and the community have expressed concern. Study group members will also be discussing instructional approaches appropriate to American pluralism and identity.

Coordinating these activities has involved a great deal of interdepartmental cooperation. Members of the different academic departments have conferred regularly about topics, speakers, scheduling, and funding. The team will be meeting with the Academic Senate to discuss implementation of the college's proposed interculturai degree requirement, a new element in the general education pattern, and how the American Cultures program can contribute. *(Ron Taylor: 707/527-4626)*

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Harold Washington College, Chicago, Illinois...*exploring common ground by linking African American and Latin American courses.*

Harold Washington College's team—Jim Heard, Mike Ruggeri, and Christine Franz—implemented its Action Plan to link sections of *African American History* and *Latin American History* in Fall 1996. Professors Heard and Ruggeri scheduled their classes at the same time and chose adjoining classrooms. In addition to assigning common reading selections. They brought their students together for six special combined classes during the semester. These special lectures, planned as school-wide events to which the entire educational community was invited, focused on six distinct common ground topics.

The first combined lecture addressed the topic *Common ground in the pre-European religious experiences of the African and Mesoamerican people.* Experts on Mesoamerica and Africa were guest lecturers. One hour of panel discussion was followed by fifteen minutes of questions from the students and audience. The event was attended by more than 125 people. Significant elements of common ground were found in the two pre-colonial religions.

The second combined lecture featured Nobel Prize-winning writer Derrick

American Pluralism in Microcosm: *The City of Santa Ana as Text*

by Tom Osborne

In my twenty-seven years of college and university teaching, no classroom project has so excited and rewarded my students and me as this one. My colleagues, Angelina Veyna and John Nixon, and I had several goals in mind, the most important of which was to help students search out what the city's richly diverse population might have in common and to determine to what extent Santa Ana is representative of America's changing urban landscape. Another goal was to provide history students with an *experiential* mode of learning about how the past is connected to the present. The third goal was to help our students connect their college to their community. When the semester ended, the fourteen students in my honors class, *U.S. History Since the Civil War*, reported that this extra-credit project (which they all chose to do) transformed them, not only intellectually, but for some, attitudinally and spiritually.

The students organized themselves into team of two-four people to explore the city of Santa Ana, California, where Rancho Santiago College is situated. They went on foot, took city buses, and drove cars. Systematically, they studied the spatial layout of their city, encountered and interviewed the diverse peoples here, absorbed the cultural productions of Santa Ana's art galleries, museum, book stores, and historical architectural sites, and visited various places of worship throughout the city. Each person kept a journal. Each team compiled a portfolio album of photographs and commentaries. Various teams prepared large hand-drawn maps of the city's transportation network, its educational institutions, and various city services. One particularly enterprising student prepared a well-researched and narrated twenty-minute film documentary.

At the end of the semester, the teams presented their findings using charts and the film. Together, we polished and refined the presentation, adding a song composed and sung by a class member. This final presentation was filmed to be used to share the project with our colleagues to encourage them to undertake similar projects.

Our chancellor, Vivian Blevins, wrote a feature article about the presentation for our college's publication, *Rancho Santiago College Bridges*. And a highly-regarded city-wide publication, *Eye on Santa Ana*, published an article in its Spring 1996 issue.

Most importantly, the students' voices should be heard, so here are excerpts from two journals. After visiting a Jewish synagogue, one student wrote about the Rabbi's approach to dealing with religious pluralism. "The *same north* theory was introduced to me during the course of my *City as Text* project, in which my assignment was to experience a religion other than my own. In the theory, as explained by the Rabbi, we acknowledge that we all have the same north, but that there are many different routes that one can take in getting there. The theory can be applied directly to life, in which we acknowledge that the goal is to be good people. However, the routes, or lives that we lead in getting there will differ. This goes a step further than simply saying 'everyone is the same.' It goes even deeper to explain that the goal itself is a common one."

Another student, a white woman from a very affluent family living in a nearby upscale suburb, wrote about her experience visiting a large inner city African American Baptist church. "Nearly the entire congregation was African American save myself and four others (trust me, I was counting!). I arrived early to assure seating because there was to be a special performance by a 100-voice gospel choir from Clark's College in Georgia. In no time at all the church filled with at least 500 people—standing room only! I thought I was going to die when the preacher asked all of the people who were visiting for the first time to stand up. In retrospect, I'm glad I stood because the members in near proximity to me went out of their way to make me feel welcome...My attempt at a stoic facade dissoived almost immediately as the church literally began to move with the choir's singing. These choristers were belting songs of praise from their guts with more passion and vigor than I had ever felt! Before I knew it I was clapping and dancing in my seat with the rest of them! The initial awkwardness I felt in being an obvious minority had vanished. What a beautiful experience of racial unity through faith, music, and love."

This fall, my two colleagues implemented the new module in their classes. As for me, I can hardly wait to introduce my modern American history class to *American Pluralism in Microcosm: The City of Santa Ana as Text* in the spring of 1997. Only this time, my students are going to have to take me exploring with them.

Tom Osborne is professor of history, Rancho Santiago College, CA.

NEWS, *continued*

Walcott, a Black man brought up in the British school system in the West Indies who has been greatly influenced by Latin American history and literature. He is conversant in African, Latin American and European culture and literature. His publishers provided students with a list of his poetry.

The third combined event was a field trip to Chicago's Museum of Natural History and Archeology—the Field Museum. The students toured Mesoamerican and African Art exhibits to seek common ground in the artistic expressions of the two cultures.

The fourth combined class addressed *Slavery in Mesoamerica and pre-colonial Africa*, a topic that has special resonance in both cultures. Two outside experts in this field were invited as guest lecturers to address the entire Harold Washington educational community. The joint presentations were compelling, and revealed a striking extent of common ground in terms of the experience of slavery before the arrival of the Europeans.

The fifth topic, *The African impact on Latin America*, truly reflected the idea behind the project team's Action Plan. All Latin American students, indigenous, mestizo, or black and all African American students have been influenced by cultural elements springing from the African Diaspora and finding roots in Latin America and the Caribbean—from music, to dance, to food, and to art. An anthropologist who specializes in this area was guest speaker.

As the semester drew to a close, the project team presented the final topic, *Music and common ground*, by bringing the combined classes to an event where Latin and African music and cuisine were explored and enjoyed.

Harold Washington College's Action Plan also included an evaluative element. Professor Heard's students kept a journal of their impressions of the special course events, which was submitted on a periodic basis for evaluation and commentary. Professor Ruggeri's students submitted a short paper describing their impressions after each event. At the end of the semester, the two professors asked for a summary of their students' views. *(Jim Heard. 312/553-5753)*

News From NEH

Dear Colleagues:

Eighteen **Humanities Focus Grants** were funded at the November meeting of the National Council on the Humanities (see below). Four of the eighteen grants were awarded to two-year colleges! These grants provide each college with approximately $25,000 to support faculty released time, stipends for project directors and participants, secretarial support, visits from consulting scholars, books or software integral to the project, and some travel expenses.

The next Humanities Focus Grant deadline is April 18, 1997. Now is the ideal time to discuss ideas with your faculty colleagues and administrators. Send for the guidelines, then call us to discuss your ideas. Your chances for success in this program are high: overall, we funded about 25% of the **Humanities Focus Grant** applications received in September, but we funded about 36% of the community college applications. Despite budget cuts, these ratios mirror the range of success rates traditional in NEH Education Programs. **This is a good time for your college to apply!**

Among the NEH Summer Institutes available for 1997 is one sponsored by the Community College Humanities Association (CCHA). Entitled *The Maya World in Guatemala, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, it will be held in Mexico in June and July. If you are interested in participating in this institute or any other NEH Summer Seminar or Institute in 1997, send for a flier and apply to the project director by March 1.

Our telephone numbers are: 202/606-8380 for information on **Humanities Focus Grants**; and 202/606-8463 for information on **Summer Seminars and Institutes**. The NEH homepage for this information and more is http://www.neh.fed.us. Our mailing address is: NEH, Division of Research and Education, Room 318, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20506.

Congratulations on all of your good work. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Judy Jeffrey Howard, Program Officer
Division of Research and Education

NEH Announces Focus Grant Awards

Four Community Colleges Selected

Awards for Humanities Focus Grants beginning in January 1997 were announced December 1996 by the National Endowment for the Humanities. These grants are for projects that enable groups of faculty within an institution or among related institutions to explore humanities topics. Grant monies provide support for joint study, outside experts, workshops on scholarly and curricular issues, and planning. For more information about NEH Humanities Focus Grants, see *News From NEH* above.

Among the award recipients are:

- ***Witness to an Era (1891-1960): The Work of Zora Neale Hurston as a Voice of Southern Life and Culture***, Association to Preserve Eatonville Community, Inc., FL
- ***Fiction and Technology***, **Kirkwood Community College**, IA
- ***A Partnership to Study Ethics Between Utah Valley State College and Elementary and Secondary Schools***, **Utah Valley State College**, UT
- ***A Faculty Development Seminar in Native American Literatures and Cultures***, **Saddleback College**, CA
- ***Understanding Contemporary Japan: A Cultural Perspective***, **Amarillo College**, TX
- ***Faculty Summer Seminar: The Intellectual Roots of Compassion***, Millikin University, IL
- ***"The City"—a Prototype Digital Resource Kit Designed Through Partnership***, Johns Hopkins University, MD
- ***Designing Articulation Plans for Schools and Colleges with Large Numbers of Heritage Language Learners***, University of Arizona
- ***A Map of Medieval Thought: The Hereford Mappamundi Project***, Plymouth State College, NH

Service Learning and the Humanities, *continued from page 2*

types, and to play an instrumental role in stopping marginalization. As service learning students, they have the opportunity to provide valuable interpersonal connections for new marginal groups. Our sociology instructors are convinced that service learning reduces prejudice and discrimination.

At Kapi'olani Community College, we see great potential for linking our humanities curriculum with service learning pedagogy to explore communities and create common ground. Topics include *Traditions of Service in Ethnic Communities Served by Our College, Service and Leadership in the American Experience, Multicultural Contributions to the American Experience*, and *The Isolating Nature of Technology or Technology for Common Ground?*

In just four semesters, working actively, cooperatively and responsibly with thirty-five Kapi'olani faculty members, 1,100 Kapi'olani students have contributed more than 22,000 hours of service to the community by partnering with 70 non-profit organizations and schools. Many other community colleges are also rapidly developing service learning programs. Substantial resources already exist at AACC's Service Learning Clearinghouse (phone: 202/728-0200 ext. 254, fax: 202/833-2467, E-mail: grobinson@aacc.nche.edu, Web site http://www.aacc.nche.edu/spcproj/service/service.htm) and at the Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges (phone: 602/461-7392, fax: 602/461-7806, E-mail: conss@mc.maricopa.edu, Web site http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/academic/compact).

Beyond the Classroom

The humanities can play a major role in creating common ground among members of the college and its surrounding community. Colleges need to develop explicit co-curricular strategies that create opportuinities for a plurality of voices to be heard. These voices can be heard through conversations, panel discussions, readings, and, of course, the visual and performing arts. These voices should be expressed throughout the academic year and/or combined for greater focus and impact into multi-day festivals and celebrations. At KCC, we will be sponsoring our ninth international/multicultural festival with the theme of *Voyaging* in March, 1997. A highlight of this festival will be activities addressing the topic *Vietnam: Awakening the Dragon*, a project sponsored by the Hawai'i State Committee for the Humanities.

By developing common ground pedagogy and curriculum in the classroom, co-curricular learning activities on campus, and service learning opportunities in the community, Kapi'olani Community College has created a continuum of learning from classroom to campus to community and back again. This continuum is the common ground between the campus and the community we serve. We are extending the continuum to international cross-cultural education and cyberspace. In sum, we are actively, cooperatively and responsibly constructing our campus identity for the twenty-first century.

America's community colleges are ideally positioned to create social interconnections. Through a pedagogy and curriculum that connects the classroom, the campus and the community, and by providing service learning opportunities that are explicitly cross-cultural, inter-generational, and integrating, community colleges can create common ground in the communities they serve. It is critical that our campuses become more engaged in our communities now. For America's marginalized, the twenty-first century is light years away.

Robert Franco is coordinator for Asian-Pacific Studies at Kapi'olani Community College, Hawai'i and serves as a mentor for the Exploring America's Communities *project. He is active in several national service learning projects.*

American Association of Community Colleges
Exploring America's Communities Project
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036
202/728-0200

Editor: Diane U. Eisenberg
Associate Editor: Nadya Labib

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